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THE OLD LIBERTY BELL.

BY CALEB DUNN.

The Liberty Pole from the village square
Points its sustenance top to the sky;
For nearly a century it has stood there,
And watched the years go by.

Many a gathering of friendly ones
Has assembled around its base,
And many a song of liberty and guns
Has echoed about the place.

Many a procession has passed it by,
On the Nation's natal day,
And cheered that banner in the sky,
In a heart-like, jubilant way.

Tales of the old-time days could be told
By the ancient standing
Legends of boys and legends of gold,
Of men and of freedom.

But about its brow the wind may sing,
And the storm may beat its side,
Yet this veteran, like a veniens thing,
Is mute through pleasure or pain.

It has seen the young grow old and white,
And watched Life's ongoing flame,
But still, with its brow in the bright sunlight,
The Liberty Pole stands the same.

THE GRANADAN DUEL;

OR, THE

Castilian and the Moor.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SERAGLIO.

At the dawning of the Alcaide there was consternation and dismay. The morning hot came, and no intelligence from Manfred. Then for a knowledge of the calamity had befallen Morgiana and Jaffa; but they could be given to ignorance as we were when the Countess knew not. Then she was missed, she was heard herself with terror and alarm, and she might have been prostrated for a time by the paroxysm had she not been called to administer consolation to the wildly weeping Princess of St. Michael. Ida was for a brief space almost paralyzed, for she believed that the fair Morgiana had been spirited away by the unknown lover and friend on whom he had twice drawn his knightly sword.

Gay could only shake and feel in his utter inability to render assistance, and he called loudly upon Ben Ahmed to demand the royal interference.

In the midst of the Bahal of grief old Hafed appeared upon the scene. He drew Morgiana from the arms of Ida, and he looked at her, and not before upon her distressed face. Serious warnings, nor did he seem at all surprised that the object which had overtaken her son was suspended over herself. He told her that he had found the place of Manfred's durance, and that he had set a trusty man upon the watch.

"Be yourself, dear lady," he said, "I urge you to this for your own sake, for your child's sake, for the sake of my daughter, who has given her love of Heaven, and for the love you bear your son, do not make yourself unfortunate."

In that place, and at that time, Morgiana could not ask the question which her anxiety dictated, and she signified to her friend and servitude her fair lady's wishes to be done.

To the others Hafed told of Manfred's situation, and he assured them that he had received no confer with them when Ben Ahmed was called away by a messenger from the King.

"I am going to the King," said the Alcaide, as he was about to turn away, "and be sure I will plead for my friends. Ida, I know where Manfred is, I can appeal to Jozef with you, and I will do so. Be of good cheer, and soon you shall be free."

However much he may shrink from the task assigned him, the noble knight did the unselfish goodness of heart, and his deep sense of justice, will not suffer him to withhold his saving hand from the brave knight who has served him so well. I need hardly confess to you," he continued, after a pause, turning to Ben Ahmed, "that I am sorry to learn that the King of Granada are one and the same person."

"How? Abdalla!—King of Granada!" cried Hafed, with a convulsive start.

"Aye," answered the Alcaide. "Our monarch is fond of assuming that name when away from his palace, but he is known to few out-side. Hast thou ever met him in that character?"

Hafed stood like one upon whom a thunderbolt had fallen; and he was only recalled to a sense of surrounding things by Ben Ahmed, who, pale and trembling, like one frightened by a terrible vision, had tottered forward and sank down his arm.

"Hafed! Hafed!" she whispered. "What is it?"

"Hush!" he enjoined. "It can be nothing. It was a wild phantasy, that's all with me."

And thus speaking, the old man led her from the room, leaving those behind in their amazement.

"By my life!" cried Gay, after they had gone, "the mystery deepens!"

"Mystery or no mystery," added Michael, "and may kind Heaven vouchsafe a speedy solution to it, I must away to the King."

He even if have spoken sooner, but his weak and feeble from her great agony, demanded his attention, and he took her upon his arm and led her from the room.

Ben Ahmed, meanwhile, was on his way to the Alhambra. He found the King with only the few of mates in attendance, and was at once admitted to audience; and the monarch, with him, were the business he had to transact.

Ben Ahmed," he said, his look and tone giving token to one who was used to his moods that he had a great weight upon his mind, "I must say I am surprise thee if I announce that I have received to take thy daughter for my wife."

If the Alcaide grew sign of surprise, it was surely a surprise of joy.

"And I pursued the King, "I would have thy consent to the act."

"Sire," answered Ben Ahmed, and he had left to speak the word. Miriam is already thine."

"So far as thou canst assign her," said the King, with a meaning look. "But how is it with the lady herself? Will her heart be mine?"

"I trust so, sire."

Thinkest thou it is impossible that she may love another?"

THE HAPPY MEETING OF ABDALLA AND MORGIANA HIS LONG-LOST WIFE.

"If thou alludest to the Prince Haroun, I can give thee assurance that she hath put all jealousies and fears aside."

"I allude not to the Prince. I allude to the Christian knight, Gay of St. Mark."

Ben Ahmed started and caught his breath.

"The Knight of Castile is beneath thy roof?" said Jozef.

"Yes, sire."

"And hath rendered great service to Miriam?"

"Yes, sire,—but—as Heaven is my ultimate hope—"

"Enough, Ben Ahmed," interrupted the King, with a wave of the hand. "I believe that thou art ignorant of the matter; and it may be that my suspicions are ill-founded; but if even will I guard against the possibility. I have duly considered, and I will on this very day make the Princess Miriam my wife. I would have no jarring elements around me. Thou hast my consent, and I will forward the proper papers to-day. Go, and tell the lady Miriam that she is betrothed to me, and she will be the second out of my wicked brother must not be permitted to perpetuate in the throne of my father. It would be a calamity to Granada. Miriam is of our line. Her mother was my father's sister. She knows it well."

"I know" said Ben Ahmed.

"And what hitherto thee of my plan?"

"It accords with my own wishes, sire."

"Then bring the Knight of Castile to me. I will send a fitting escort. She hath long known my friend Miriam, and cannot be entirely unprepared."

Ben Ahmed bowed to the then best directed. And now said I was to the royal coffer to some other matter of pressing importance?"

The King smiled assent, and the Alcaide proceeded to relate the circumstances of Sir Manfred's disappearance, concluding with the report of old Hafed. It was known that the youth had been seized by Prince Haroun, and was now a prisoner in the Prince's house.

"Is this true?" asked the King.

"I do not think" he said, "that Haroun meditates personal harm to the youthful knight. If I thought he did, I would send a force to the rescue on the instant, for I have conceived a strong love for the brave Christian; but I am confident that the only object of the Prince in the present case is to keep out these Castilian knights from the city. Necessity, I believe, is the only excuse he has to offer in his outrage, and I will see that Manfred is set free. I will send a messenger at once, and Sir Manfred shall be free before he learned. So rest thee easy on that score, Ben Ahmed. And now, how fareth thy fair daughter for the nuptials. She shall share my throne, and we will plantage. I know that she will understand this."

The Alcaide's honor suspended over his head, and it was a wonder that he did not forget to press further the claims of Manfred; nor is it a wonder that Jozef, in view of the momentous step upon which he had resolved, should have so soon at hand dismissed the neglected haste in the same matter. He did not believe that Haroun meditated personal injury to the Christian. Within the bounds of possibility there was nothing that he did not consider such an outrage, and he was carefully impressed with the faith that Haroun only sought to banish the dangerous Christians from the realm; and he would consider that business in due time. The banishment could not well be consummated without his will.

Ben Ahmed hastened away to his palace, and he found Miriam in the seraglio. As he approached, he ordered the guards to admit him. He next proceeded to the apartments of his daughter, where he was engaged with her maid.

"Miriam," he said, "then art to bear my company to the royal dwelling of the Alhambra. Array thyself in befitting attire."

The Princess started as from the spring of a deadly thing, and turned pale like unto death.

"O, my father, why is this?"

"Thou should'st know the meaning, my child; for surely the prospect hath been open to thee long enough."

"Is it—to marry with the King?"

"Aye. Then art to become, I say, Sultana—our monarch's first and only wife."

Miriam sank upon a seat, and for a while she seemed lost in thought. Her self-possession had not expected that she would ex-

hibit joy in prospect of the nuptials, but he had seen that there was a cause. A little reflection, however, led him to the cause of this opposition. She had already manifested such favor for the King of a possible union with Jozef; and he was not surprised that she should shrink from the thought of further deceit and trouble. Who the loved one was he had not the slightest intimation, though he wondered how the King had guessed the truth.

Ben Ahmed's first impulse was one of disappointment and wrath; and had he given way to it, he would have spoken words to chill and wound where he had never before spoken. But his better judgment prevailed. He loved his beautiful daughter, and since she was to become the wife of the King, he would make the way as smooth as possible.

"Miriam," he said, advancing and taking her hand, "I would not urge thee to aught that is beyond the power of earth to make it. Reflect, my child, upon the glory and honor that are open for thee—and for thee alone of all the women of Granada. The people have marveled much that no royal mate ever yet taken a wife. It is a source of great question. Why the King was my father's sister. He knows I have a score of wives from the fairest and noblest families in the realm, and he has not favored

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whom the youth now knew for Al Modi. He came in and looked at the unfurnished wands, and then looked upon the prisoner.

"How now, Sir Knight? Dost thou not eat?" —Thou seest," answered Manfred.

Al Modi's quick eye caught the tone of the reply that it was crisp and defiant.

"Had thine appetite deserted thee?" he said, watching the youth's face narrowly.

"Entirely so," said Manfred.

And yet thou didst thank us for the food which we sent thee?"

"Wrong to blaspheme for attentions which we cannot profit by," said the youth, quoting the Mood's kind words, "and wrong to be willing to take the will for what it is worth."

Al Modi regarded the prisoner a few moments in silence, and then turned away and left the apartment. Manfred followed him, and the man's suspicions were aroused, and he hastened to the door and placed his ear against a panel, and distinctly heard the announcement made that his food had not been touched; and he heard, moreover, enough to convince him that further proof were needed that his neglect to eat and drink had thus far been a wise one.

After the the minutes passed slowly and heavily away until the prisoner again heard the sound of approaching feet, and he withdrew to the far corner of the room, and was careful to wear the severe look which Abbas had given him concealed beneath his outer clothing. Presently the door was opened, and Al Modi once more entered, followed by two attendants, and three of the guard remained. They approached the spot where the prisoner stood, and paused in front of him, and spoke:

"Sir Manfred, it hath been decreed that thou must die. We would have made the death like unto a sudden sinking to sleep; but our plans have been frustrated. Will thou kneel and pray, or will thou stand on thine art?"

"I shall not kneel here," replied the youth, defiantly.

"Then die where thou art."

The sword of Al Modi drew his sword, and his attendants followed his example, the three advancing their points as if to be certain of thrusting him through where he stood; but instantly a shadow seemed to fall upon the spirit of their purpose. Like a flash appeared the bright blade of the knight, and thinking that two opponents would be less dangerous than three he made the sweep across and over the neck, laying him low on the moment. The movement had been so quickly performed that their companion had fallen before the blow was seen, and they realized that danger was aroused.

Al Modi drew back with an exclamation of surprise, and his man followed suit. The game was not as they had anticipated. They knew something of the prowess of the knights of Alcala, and it became a serious question in the mind of Al Modi whether they were safe in successfully cope with the champion.

"Sir Manfred, I have been deceived," he said; "but I shall be more careful. Thou hast fallen by thine own hand, and thou shalt be followed by this direct attempt at assassination. If he allowed three two men to depart, they would bring back with them a force of men by which he might not cope. Thus was he meditating when a new sound broke the air—that of hurrying feet, and the hum of many voices.

"Hold!" he cried, as his men started backward, toward the door. "Add not coward-ice to your other faults. Those feet and voices chosen the sword, and stand to it!"

He struck as he spoke, and Al Modi's sword, even stuck. Another movement, and his keen blade passed through the body of the attendant ruthless from side to side.

Al Modi staggered back and made for the door, shouting at the top of his voice for help. And help came. In a moment more Prince Harold, with Abbas and a dozen attendants, followed by a party of the guard, rushed in, and when he saw what had been done—when he saw two of his men-at-arms prostrate, and his chief henchman sorely wounded—he gave the order for cutting down the prisoner with out mercy.

At least half a score of swords were leveled against the knight, and though he defended himself valiantly in the first encounter, yet he must soon have fallen had not a new actor appeared upon the scene.

"Hold! Ye know not what ye do!" cried out a strange voice; and following it came Sir Guy of St. Mark rushing through the surging throng.

The Prince saw him, and also saw that he was followed closely by Bro Abbas.

"Ta, ta, ta! Harold, by the holy rags, 'then art the traitor!" And he aimed a blow at the head of the prince's brother.

But Bro Abbas was much quicker than he had anticipated, and was prepared. Stooping he avoid the descending blow, and he struck the Prince to the heart with his dagger.

"I yell Allah to witness!" Abbas cried as he held the crimsoned steel aloft, "that I have struck the best blow I ever struck. Gramala should bless me for this."

Then shall he praise me!" he all scrutiny, and never more was heard from him.

The prince was downed, as Sir Guy, the friend Chamberlain, appeared on the scene, a score of the royal guard following at his heels.

Manfred was saved, and the death of the Prince was in the hands of officers whom Turk commanded.

Manfred looked first upon Guy, and then upon old Hafed, who had come with the chamberlain, and he asked how it had all happened.

"Ta, ta, ta! Manfred, by the holy rags, 'twas something about the Prince and Bro Abbas yourself, when the royal guard came up. Ye gave me the cue, and I joined them."

Turk advanced and gazed upon the youthful Knight of Alcala, and thought that he had was bowed; but only for a moment.

"There is no time for explanations," he cried, starting up. "There is other business than words and explanations; and, if I mistake not, we cannot make too much haste. Sir Manfred, thou art free. Sir Guy, thou and I will ride to the castle of Alcala, and there will the movements.—Sir Manfred, fear not, for most clowed if any can find the prisoner. The mother shall join thee anon."

As Turk passed the prostrate body of Prince Haroun, which some of the attendants had removed to the couch, he touched it with his hand, and when he found it utterly lifeless he gave thanks to Allah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

As white as alabaster, and almost as lifeless, was the Princess Miriam as she leaned upon the arm of Turk, and was led from the room to her seat in the box of the Ambassadors, where the King had placed her on the previous evening. She had not yet been decreed that she must die. We would have made the death like unto a sudden sinking to sleep; but our plans have been frustrated. Will thou kneel and pray, or will thou stand on thine art?"

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But not far,—no, not far. The King had arisen so much the surprising maiden, and was upon the point of clapping her down into throne, when a shout of rage—the tone and the tramp of many feet, broke the air from the Court of Lions, and very soon the Grand Chamberlain entered the royal presence, his face flushed, and his whole manner with dismay.

"How now, Turk?" demanded the monarch, in startled surprise.

"Sire," replied the Chamberlain, bowing low, "I have a most startling revelation to make."

"Speak, good Turk, and keep me not in suspense. Thy very looks bode some terrible mystery."

Turk looked around, and when he had seen that only the privileged ones, the officers and friends of the royal household were present, he spoke:

"Sire, know first, that thy nephew, Prince Haroun, is dead. He fell, in the midst of his traitorous iniquity, by the hand of one of his own servants.

"By the hand of a slave?" cried Jusef. "And is the caitiff living?"

The servant did so without delay. He struck the blow that slew the Prince, and he is now my brother. He struck to save that noble youth whose sword was raised behind the back and death in the heart.

"Ha! I remember. Ben Ahmed told me of the youth's arrest. Was not Jusef mean that his cousin attempted his life?"

He did, sire."

"And wherefore?"

"For that the Prince reign aright, O King. His rents would have cut down the Knight of Alcala, and he would have had he might have overthrown them.

"By Heavens! Turk; there is mystery in this affair. How came the Knight of Alcala in Haroun's foul intents?"

"I brought the messenger, sire, whom I will introduce if it pleaseth thee.

So little had been the scorn of the monarch's heart in the ceremony which had been interrupted by the discovery of his nephew's foul, that his mind seemed wholly diverted from it by the mention of the name of the youthful Knight of Alcala—the handsome face had so wonderfully attracted him on a former occasion, and he was full of curiosity and surprise, and he sought a solution of the mystery. If Turk had spoken, he had not indicated the revelation.

"Bring in the messenger," he commanded.

The Chamberlain retired, and presently returned leading Hafed by the hand.

"Take it the man, sire, of whom I spoke."

The King looked upon the man who stood directly in advance of Turk, with a curious stare, and trembled from head to foot.

Nor was Hafed himself without emotion. When he beheld the man who wore the royal robes, and who sat upon the throne, he knew that Granada, a quick gasp of surprise burst from his lips, and he stood as one fascinated by the fierce of his own colossus.

"Ha! it is the Moor!" cried the King, in a sharp tone of surprise.

"ALLAH!" uttered the old man, still gazing spellbound upon the monarch.

"Thou art Hafed?"

"Yes, sire."

"I was Abdalla in those other years." The monarch spoke like one who has thought, as he started down from the dais and caught the hand of Hafed.

"Hafed.—If thou art Hafed, the dead is alive, and the lost is found. Speak to me, Hafed. Incline thy form head to rest, and know not what to say."

"Speak!" cried Hafed, upon the shoulder, and laids him speak; and thus bidden, the old man poured forth his thoughts, and presently replied.

"I was spy, your Majesty, I left Granada, bearing with me a child of the royal blood. I was told by Turk that these two were the only survivors of the massacre.

"Hold!" interposed Jusef, now pale with excitement—pale and dumb by fear. "Let us have thy story clearly and plainly. Was the child that Turk had child bear away?"

Hafed took another time for thought, and finally he resumed it.

"My story, O King, is this; I was seized and bound by the Moors, and my child was taken and left in my custody by the Moorish soldier, named Morgiana."

At this point the King started forward; but in a moment he restrained himself, and motioned Hafed to go on.

"With my charge I retired to an estate in the mountains near the city of Ronda. My plans had reached the age of seventeen she was to be married to a young man of her own race, and I was to be free. I was sitting in the sunshine of my dwelling, and the loved Morgiana, and was about to return, when I saw a form coming between them, but my mistress would not see it. In her great love she saw it not. I rose, and sought only the society of her lover for myself, and I was about to depart, when I heard that the child was inconsolable, though at that time the appearance of another suitor, a claim to conceal himself from public gaze. The Moorish general was dead, and the child was the more devoted for his misfortune; and finally there came a day—

"For a year after this Abdalla continued to live with his child, and Morgiana, and he saw her dared he remove Morgiana from her own home, for he knew that she was dearer to the maiden more than a day or two. But there was at length born to them—a boy—as fair and beautiful as was Ben Ahmed.

And for a brief space thereafter Abdalla's visits were more frequent than before, and finally, when the child had reached the age of three months, Morgiana came to say that my mistress was prostrated with grief on account of the absence of her lover, and that the King's jailer came on to see and inform me that he had been a captive for months, and had been a captive for months, and

POVERTY'S FLOWERS.

BY LOUISE S. UPHAM.

"Poor?" Well, I guess so! It's a hard time for all;
There's not been much driving since early last fall;
And my rent must be paid, or into the street
We go, "bag and baggage," our neighbors to meet.
And there's lights, and there's coal, and a good bit of wood,
And so many months that are clam'rous for food—
No wonder that poor folks can't manage to live
On the miserable pittance their taskmasters give!

I have not had great wages, like some, but my door
Was never besieged by the gaunt wolf before;
But I've not had a day's work since winter set in!
There's no flour in the bag, and no coal in the bin,
Nor "oil in the cruse;" and the promise that cheers
The widow and orphan isn't meant for my ears;
For so little I get, for light jobs here and there,
Like the Prodigal, fain would I make *husks* my fare.

And then we've had sickness, to crown all the rest,
And another stray bird found its way to our nest.
"No pushing or crowding" is our rule; so you see,
No matter how many, we are sure to agree.
But I think, if the *ravens* don't come by and by,
That fed 'Lijah of old, and heed my bairns' cry,
The *robins*, that covered "the babes in the wood,"
Will be called on for blankets for some of my brood!

You have dropped in upon us, and find us, to-day,
Rather poor, I admit; and your thoughts seem to say,
"Bare floors and bare walls! what a cold, cheerless room,
With a lone candle's flicker to lighten its gloom!
On the shelves, so near empty, there's left but the ghost
Of a chicken, to hint what a full meal would cost."
Yet this dreary old room blossoms out with bright flowers,
With perfumes as rare as grace Beauty's own bowers!

"You are sure you don't see any?" Perhaps not; they are shy
Of unfolding their petals when strangers are nigh;
But their roots are deep down in our hearts, and they live
And they thrive on the sunshine our loving souls give.
Pleasant words, cheery tones and kind acts are cheap,
And bountiful harvests their givers all reap.
There be rainbows, with huge pots of gold at each end,
But home's hearthstone hath riches still surer, my friend.

What doves are more fair than the little bare feet
That run pattering out, my coming to greet?
What lilies, in all their pure bloom, can compare
With the eager-stretched hands that are fluttering there?
What sunshine more royal than the row of bright heads
That I tuck every night, with a kiss, in their beds?

"You are sure you don't envy me!" Well, I hope not;
There might not be room for us both in one lot.
"Contented and easily pleased!" Well, I know
Not all the good gifts come to *one* man, and so
I leave you your jewels, your silver and gold,
Content if I miss not one lamb from my fold.
Give me plenty of work—a whole loaf of bread—
Give not wealth, but the blossoms of childhood instead—
And I tell you, we'll own, my good wife and I,
A regal flower-garden!—Good-bye, sir, good-bye.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,
AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER CIII.

A FATAL JOURNEY.

Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed and in a cursed hour, she hies. MILTON.

On that Wednesday morning the fine steamer *Pocahontas* lay at her wharf receiving freight and passengers for Washington and Alexandria.

Her decks were crowded with men, women and children, all either going on the voyage, or "seeing off" departing friends and acquaintances.

Among the passengers on the forward deck stood a slight, elegant, graceful woman, clothed in widow's weeds and deeply vailed.

This was, of course, Mary Grey, bound upon her baleful errand.

She had spent the intervening Tuesday with her infatuated instrument, Craven Kyte. But when he pleaded to attend her to the boat and see her off, she forbade his doing so on pain of an eternal separation from her.

But she renewed their agreement that he should follow her in twelve hours, and meet her at a designated place in Philadelphia on Friday morning.

And she stayed with him until quite late in the evening, and finally left him comforted with the hope of a speedy meeting and a certain marriage.

For the edification of her landladies, the precise Miss Cranes, she trumped up a story that at once explained the necessity of her sudden journey North, and, as usual, redounded to her own credit.

She had received a telegram, she said, from a friend who had just lost her father, and who was in great affliction. And she must go on immediately to comfort that bereaved soul.

The Miss Cranes, as usual, thought she was an angel in woman's form, and bade her Heaven speed on her benevolent errand.

And now she stood upon the deck of the *Pocahontas*, waiting for that travelling companion whom she had fatally beguiled to be her escort.

The boat was getting up her steam, and yet he had not made his appearance.

What if he should not come, after all?

Just as she asked this question it was answered by his rapid approach.

He came up, travelling bag in hand, happy, smiling, radiant.

"Mrs. Grey, I have been looking for you all over the boat. I feared that I had missed you," he said gayly, holding out his hand.

"I have been waiting for you here," she answered, with a smile.

"I am glad to find you at last. But will you not come into the cabin? The deck is not a pleasant place while the boat is at the wharf," he said, as he offered her his arm.

She thanked him with a smile, took his arm, and let him lead her into the saloon.

It was at that moment empty of other visitors. And those two were tête-à-tête.

He gave her a pleasant seat, placed himself beside her, and then and there he told her of his betrothal to Emma Cavendish.

Of course she already knew all about it. But he was not aware of her knowledge. And his motives in announcing the intelligence to her was evident even to Mary Grey's vanity-blinded mind. It was to set their *own* relations at once upon a true basis, and prevent all misunderstanding and all false hopes growing out of their long-lost love.

Although she had known all this so well before he spoke of it, yet it required all her powers of self-control and duplicity to listen quietly while he spoke of her rival, and to affect a sympathy with his happiness.

Yet she did this so well that he was thoroughly deceived.

"It was all a foolish mistake our fancying we loved each other so much, was it not, Alden, dear?" she inquired, with an arch smile.

"I think so," he answered, quite frankly.

"I am glad to hear you admit that, for now we can understand each other and be good friends, and nothing more," she added sweetly.

"Yes, good friends always, Mary," he agreed.

He was so happy in his blessed love for Emma Cavendish that he felt kindly toward all the world, and especially toward this "friendless young widow," as he called her.

"But you know, Alden, that it is quite common for young men of earnest souls like yours to take a liking to women older than themselves."

"You were not older than myself, Mary."

"Not in years, perhaps, but oh! ever so much in suffering, and in the bitter knowledge of the world it brings. And thus, for this reason, I was no proper wife for a happy young man like you. No young man should ever marry a widow, and no young girl should ever marry a widower. Our fancied love for each other was a mistake, dear Alden, and I am very glad it was discovered before it was rendered irremediable."

"So am I," replied the young man quite frankly. "But, dear Mary, I hope you will henceforth look upon me and my dearest Emma as your brother and sister, for we will be truly such in *deed* as well as in word to you," he added, with grave gentleness.

"I know you will; I feel certain of that. And I thank you from my heart, while I rejoice in your happiness. Yours will be a good, wise and beautiful marriage with Emma, Alden," she murmured with emotion.

"Yes, I think so too. Thanks be to Heaven," replied the young man, reverently bowing his head.

The steamer was now pushing off from her wharf amid much pulling, hauling, hallooing and shouting.

You couldn't "hear yourself think," even in the cabin, for a while.

"We are off, I believe," said Mary Grey at length, when the uproar had subsided, and they were moving swiftly and smoothly along.

"Yes. Will you come on deck? It is pleasanter there now," said Alden, rising and offering her his arm.

She took it with a smile, and let him lead her up on deck.

And as they promenaded slowly up and down, enjoying the fine September morning and the beautiful river scenery, Mary Grey drew him on to speak of Emma Cavendish.

Of course the young lover desired no better theme.

And in this way, leading him to discourse of his love, listening to him with attention, pretending sympathy with his happiness, she effected several objects important to the success of her demoniac plot. She pleased him with himself and with her. She dispelled his suspicions, if any still lurked in his candid soul, and she kept him always near her, talking with her, and unconsciously attracting the attention of their fellow-voyagers and leading them to believe that this handsome young man, speaking so earnestly in such low tones to his companion, and the lovely youthful widow, who was listening to him with such rapt attention, were a pair of happy and devoted lovers.

Thus passed the forenoon.

When the early steamboat dinner was ready, he took her down to the table, sat beside her, and assiduously attended to her wants.

After dinner, when she was disinclined to walk or to talk, he brought out some newspapers and magazines and sat down beside her on deck, and they read together.

At tea-time he took her down to the table again.

And after tea, as the September night was cool upon the water, they sat down at one of the cabin tables and played checkers together until it was time to retire.

And thus all day long and all the evening through, in the sight of all the people, Alden Lytton unconsciously conducted himself, as Mary Grey intended that he should, like her betrothed lover.

In due time they reached Washington, and crossed the length of the city to take the train for Philadelphia, where they arrived late on Thursday night.

"Have you any preference for one hotel over another?" inquired Alden, as they stood amid the horrible din of contesting hackmen, porters, 'bus-drivers, et cetera.

"None whatever," she answered.

"Then we'll go to the Blank House, if you have no objection."

"None. We will go there."

"Here's your Blank House 'bus!" shouted a driver above all the other shouts.

"Oh! don't let us get into that crowded stage! A carriage, please," pleaded Mary Grey.

And Alden Lytton, believing her fastidiousness and timidity to be real and not affected, and withal feeling bound to be guided by her wishes, called a carriage and put her into it.

As they were rolling rapidly on their way to the Blank House, Mary Grey shivered and suddenly said:

"Oh! please, when we get to that great rambling hotel, do not let them put me away off in a room in a remote part of the house by myself or among total strangers. I always feel so frightened in a great hotel. And I am always sure to lose myself, or do something ridiculous, or get into trouble, whenever I attempt to find my way through the labyrinth of halls and passages between the bedrooms and parlors. Will you please take care of me?"

"I will take the same care of you that I would take of my sister Laura. I will see that you have a room adjoining my own," answered Alden Lytton unsuspiciously, and smiling indulgently at what he thought her childish cowardice.

When their carriage reached the Blank House, he took her up to the reception room and left her there, while he went to the office and engaged apartments for himself and for her.

And then he came for her, attended by a porter, who loaded himself with their travelling bags, umbrellas and so forth, and led the way up two pairs of stairs to a little suit of apartments, consisting of two small chambers, with a small parlor between them.

They entered the parlor first, where communicating doors on the right and left led into opposite chambers.

The porter put down the luggage, received his fee, and retired.

"I hope you like these rooms, Mrs. Grey. The two chambers are exactly alike; but if you have a preference, please take it," said Alden pleasantly.

"It does not matter the least. I will go in here," answered Mary Grey, opening the right-hand door and disappearing through it, with her travelling bag in her hand.

She found every convenience for making a clean toilet there. And when she had refreshed herself with a wash and a change of dress, she reëntered the little parlor, where she found supper laid on the table, and an attentive waiter at hand.

"I ordered supper here because I remembered your fastidiousness, and thought you would prefer this to the public dining-room," explained Alden.

"Thanks! Oh, I do like it ever so much better! I cannot endure the public rooms," said Mary Grey, as she took the seat the obsequious waiter placed for her.

"Anything more, if you please, sir?" inquired the man.

"N-n-no," answered Alden hesitatingly; for in fact, if he could have found a fair excuse, he would have preferred to have the waiter remain in attendance. The man bowed, and left the room.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE SERPENT AT WORK.

One sole desire, one passion, now remains
To keep life's fever still within her veins.
For this alone she lives—like lightning's fire,
To spend one bolt of ruin—and expire. BYRON.

Alden sat down at the table, and began to carve a roasted chicken.

While he was intent upon his task, Mary Grey drew from her watch pocket a little folded paper. With her eyes upon him, to be sure that he was not observing her, she deftly poured a white powder from this paper into one of the coffee-cups, and then quickly returned the empty paper to her watch pocket.

Meanwhile he had taken off the liver wing from the roasted chicken, and placed it on a warm plate, which he passed to her.

"Will you have a cup of coffee now, or afterward?" she inquired, as she took the offered plate.

"Now, please. Coffee is the most refreshing of all beverages after a fatiguing journey," he added, as he received the cup from her hands.

It was a very nice supper, yet neither of them seemed inclined to eat.

Mary Grey trifled with her chicken wing, tasted her milk toast, and sipped a little coffee. She looked pale, frightened and self-concentrated.

Alden Lytton drank his coffee, remarking, with a smile, that it was very, very strong, in fact quite bitter in its strength.

And when he had finished it, he pushed the cup away, saying that it had quite satisfied him, and deprived him of the inclination to take anything else.

As he said this, he looked at his companion, and noticed for the first time the ghastliness of her countenance.

"Mrs. Grey, are you ill?" he inquired, in some alarm.

"No; only fatigued from that railway journey. The train always shakes me into a jelly," she answered, shivering.

"How very delicate you are, poor child! It is a great pity you should ever be called to bear any of the roughness of life. And when my dear Emma and I have a home together, we must take care to shield you from all that," he said.

And then he sank into a sudden silence, while she watched him closely.

"Will *you* not take anything?" she inquired.

"No, thank you. That coffee was no doubt very fine; but it was a bitter draught, and it has taken away my appetite for anything else," he answered, with a smile and a half-suppressed yawn.

"Are *you* not well?" she next inquired.

"Oh, yes; quite well; never better in my life," he answered, putting his hands before his lips to conceal an irrepressible yawn.

"But you also seem very tired."

"No, only deliciously sleepy, as if I would like to go to sleep and never wake up again," he said, with a laugh and a smothered gape.

"Then do not stand on ceremony with an old friend like me. Bid me good-night and go at once," she said.

"And you?" he inquired.

"I am too tired to go to sleep yet. I shall sit in that rocking-chair and rock gently. That motion will soothe and rest me better than anything else, and after an hour I shall be able to go to bed and go to sleep."

As Mary Grey spoke, Alden Lytton staggered to his feet, and tottered toward her, held out his hand, and faltered drowsily:

"I am forced to take your advice. I must retire at once, or I shall not be able to reach my room. I never felt so overpowered by sleep in all my life before. Good-night, my dear Mrs. Grey. I hope that you will sleep as well as I am sure that I shall. Good-night."

He pressed her hand, and then groping like a blind man, he passed into his own room and shut the door behind him.

Mary Grey gazed breathlessly at the closed door for a while, murmuring to herself:

"I doubt if that fellow will be able to divest himself of his outer garments before he falls down headlong in a dead stupor. I have him in my power now! I have him in my power now! At last! At last! Oh, yes! Oh, yes, Miss Cavendish, you will marry him, will you not? And you, Stephen Lyle, how proud you will be to have his sister for your wife, and himself for a brother-in-law! But I must cover up my tracks," she added suddenly, as she went around to his vacated place at the table, and took his empty cup and rinsed it out carefully several times, throwing the water into the empty grate, where it soon dried up. Then she poured some of the coffee grounds from her own cup into the rinsed cup to conceal the rinsing. Finally she drew from her watch pocket the little white paper from which she had poured the powder into the coffee-cup, and she held it in the blaze of the gaslight until it was burned to ashes.

Then she sat down in the rocking chair, and smiled as she rested.

At intervals she bent her head toward the door leading into Alden Lytton's room and listened; but she heard no sound of life in there.

She sat on in the rocker until the striking of a large clock somewhere in the neighborhood aroused her.

It was twelve o'clock.

Midnight!

She arose and cautiously opened the door leading into Alden Lytton's room.

She looked in like a thief.

The gas was turned down very low; but by its dim light she saw him sleeping a heavy, trance-like sleep.

She went into the room, and to the door leading into the passage and bolted it.

Then she closed every window-shutter and drew down every window shade, and let down the heavy moreen curtains, making all dark.

Then she returned to the parlor, closed the intervening door, and threw herself into the rocking chair and closed her eyes, in the vain endeavor to rest and sleep.

But sleep and rest were far from her that night.

The clock struck one.

All sounds even about that busy hotel gradually ceased. The house was still, awfully still, yet she could not sleep.

The clock struck two.

She started up with a shiver, exclaiming:

"I cannot sleep; but I can go to bed and lie there."

And she went into her own room and went to bed, but not to rest.

She heard the clock strike in succession every hour of the night, until it finally struck four.

Then, when the people of the house were beginning to stir, she, overcome with fatigue and watching, at length fell asleep.

As usual in such cases of long night watching and early morning sleep, she slept long into the forenoon.

When she awoke and looked at her watch, she found it was nine o'clock.

She arose in haste and dressed herself.

This was the morning in which she was to meet her unconscious confederate in crime, Craven Kyte.

As soon as she was dressed she went into the parlor, where, it appeared, the waiter with his pass key had already been before her, for the remains of the last night's supper had been carried away and the room had been restored to order.

She then listened at Alden Lytton's door.

All was dark as a vault and still as death there.

She opened the door cautiously and went in.

He was still sleeping a death-like sleep in the pitch-dark room. She went and looked to the door leading into the passage, and found it still bolted.

Then she came out of the room, locked the door between it and the parlor, and so isolated the sleeper from all the house.

Lastly she put on her bonnet and shawl and walked out. She walked down the street for several blocks, and then hailed an empty cab that was passing and engaged it to take her to a certain picture shop in a distant part of the city.

It was at this shop that she had engaged to meet Craven Kyte that morning at ten o'clock.

A half-hour's rapid drive brought her to the place.

On arriving, she got out, paid and dismissed the cab, and entered the shop.

It was not yet ten o'clock, nor had her intended tool and victim yet made his appearance.

It was also too early for the usual customers of the establishment.

But a polite clerk came forward and placed a catalogue and a small telescope in her hands, that she might the better examine the pictures.

"Thank you. I would like to look at a city Directory first, if you please," she said, as she put aside the catalogue and the telescope.

The clerk handed her the required volume.

She turned to the church directory, and looked down its columns until she found what she seemed to be in search of.

And then she marked it with a pencil and closed the book.

At that moment Craven Kyte entered the shop.

On catching sight of her whom he loved and came to meet, his face lighted up with joy, and he hastened toward her.

But she held up a warning finger to him, and in obedience to its signal he moderated his transports and came to her quietly.

"This is no place to make demonstrations of that sort," she said. "Here, take your pencil and a bit of paper and copy off this address for me," she added, opening the Directory and pointing to the name she had marked.

"The Rev. Mr. Borden, No. —, —— street," said Craven Kyte, reading the address that he had copied.

"That will do; now come along. We will go straight to that reverend gentleman's house," said Mary Grey.

And they left the shop together.

"Oh, Mary, my love! my love! How tantalizing it is to me to meet you here in public, where I may scarcely take your dear hand, when my heart is nearly breaking with its repressed feelings!" he whispered, in eager tones.

"You impatient boy, you are worse than any spoiled child!" she said archly.

"Oh, Mary! my love! my lady! you will keep your promise! You will be mine to-day!" he pleaded.

"I will be yours within two hours, upon one condition."

"Name it! name it!" he eagerly exclaimed.

"*You must not marry me under your own name, but under that of Alden Lytton.*"

When she had said this, she stole a glance at him to see how he took it, and she was somewhat abashed by the look of unutterable amazement on the honest face of the young man.

"Come, what do you say to that?" she inquired.

"My dear Mary, what an astounding proposition!" he exclaimed.

"But you will agree to it?"

He was silent.

"You will agree to this, because you love me," she added.

But he continued silent and very sad.

"You will agree to do this, for the sake of making me your wife?" she persisted.

"My dearest Mary, it is impossible!" he answered with a painful effort.

"There! I knew it. Say no more. You professed great love for me once. You were willing to do, dare, or die for me, if necessary. You wished me to put you to the test, to TRY you, as you called it. Yet the very first time I have tested your sincerity, you have failed me, as I foresaw that you would. Good-bye, Mr. Craven Kyte. We part here, and we part for ever," said Mary Grey, with cold contempt, as she turned away from him.

"No, no, no! for Heaven's sake, no!" cried the young man piteously. "Do not leave me so suddenly. Give me time to think. Oh, I cannot, cannot part with you. I must, must have you at any cost!" he muttered to himself.

She stopped, and contemplated him as with scornful pity.

"Come, come into the square here and sit down. Let us talk this matter over. Pray do. Oh, I cannot lose you so!" he pleaded, seizing her hand.

"Well, I will go in and sit on one of those benches for a few moments, and give you the opportunity of recovering your place in my confidence," she said, with a sort of contemptuous pity, as she turned and entered the square.

He followed her immediately, and they sat down together.

CHAPTER CV.

A WICKED WEDDING.

Bid me to leap
From off the battlements of yonder tower
And I will do it. SHAKESPEARE.

"Now tell me what you wish me to do, and why you wish me to do it," said the lover submissively.

"I have already told you *what* I wish you to do. *Why* I wish you to do it must remain my secret for the present. You must trust me. Oh, Craven!" she added, suddenly changing her tone to one of soft, sorrowful pleading, "*why* will you not trust *me*, when I am about to trust *you* with the happiness of my whole future life?"

"I *do* trust you—I trust you, as I love you, without limit!" answered the poor fellow, almost weeping.

"Ah! you *say* you do, yet you refuse to do as I wish you," sorrowfully replied the siren.

"I refuse no longer! I will do anything in the world you wish me to do with joy, if in that way I can have you for my own," he declared, with tearful emphasis.

"I knew you would. You are a dear, good, true heart, and I love you more than life!" she said, giving his arm a squeeze. "Listen now."

He became suddenly all devoted attention, as she artfully unfolded to him just as much of her nefarious plan as was absolutely necessary to secure his coöperation in it. The whole of her scheme in all its diabolical wickedness she dared not expose to his honest soul.

She told him now that she had set her mind on a harmless practical joke, to win a wager with Emma Cavendish.

She said that he must go with her to see the Rev. Mr. Borden, rector of St. —— Church, and ask him to perform the marriage ceremony between them. And that he must give his own name as Mr. Alden Lytton, attorney at law, Richmond, Virginia, and give her name as it was—Mrs. Mary Grey, of the same city. And that they must be married under those names.

The young man stared until his black eyes looked big as old Booth's in the last scene of Richard.

"But why?" he inquired.

"A practical joke, I tell you. Ah, how hard you are to manage! Why can you not trust me through a little mystery like this—a little practical joke like this?"

"I *do* trust you; but I am afraid that it might seem like a practical forgery to be married under another person's name," he replied.

"Nonsense! Do you think that I could be such an idiot as to implicate you in any act that might be construed into forgery, practical or otherwise?" she inquired with a light laugh.

"O no, certainly you are not the lady to do that," he admitted.

"Well, then, what next? You look as solemn as a judge or an owl."

"I am afraid also, that if I should be married under any other name than my own, our marriage itself might turn out to be nothing more than a practical joke instead of a legal union."

"Mr. Kyte!" she suddenly exclaimed, with her eyes flashing fire. "You insult me! Am *I* the sort of woman that would compromise my good name in a marriage of doubtful legality?"

"O no, certainly you would not. Nor did I mean that. I earnestly beg your pardon," said Craven penitently.

"You are a silly gander, and a dear, darling duck of a boy! And I love you! But you must understand that I know what I am about. And you must trust me; you must *trust* me; and once for all, you must TRUST me," she said archly, giving his arm another squeeze.

"I do, I do. Come. Shall we be going? I am on the rack till our wedding is over."

"Yes, but we must take a cab. The distance is a long one."

"There is a cab stand a couple of blocks from here. I noticed it as I came along. We will take one there, if you please."

She assented, and they walked on to the stand and engaged a cab.

When they were seated in it Craven Kyte ordered the cabman to drive to the rectory of St. —— Church.

Half an hour's driving brought them to their destination.

When the cab drew up to the door of the house Craven was about to alight, when Mary Grey stopped him.

"Wait," she said. And taking from her card case a pencil and a blank card, she wrote upon it the name:

"MR. ALDEN LYTTON."

"Send that in," she said, handing the card to the bewildered young man.

Craven Kyte took it, looked at it attentively, and then exclaimed:

"Why, that is exactly like Mr. Lytton's own handwriting. If I had not seen you write it, I should have taken it to be his autograph."

"Should you? So much the better. But never mind that now. Go and do as I told you."

He alighted immediately and went up to the door of the house. He rang the bell, and sent in the card by the servant who answered it.

After the lapse of a few moments, the servant came back with a very favorable message.

Craven Kyte returned to the cab, and whispered:

"Mr. Borden is at home and will see us. Come."

And he assisted her to alight.

And they went into the rectory, and were shown by the servant into the study of the rector.

Mary Grey courtesied to the gray-haired, dignified clergyman, who arose to receive her; but she kept her vail down, as she took her seat in the chair he placed for her.

Craven Kyte then drew the reverend gentleman aside, and spoke to him in a low voice.

Mr. Borden nodded and nodded as the speaker proceeded.

When he had finished speaking, the rector inquired:

"Both of legal age?"

"Both of more than legal age, and both quite independent of others," answered Craven Kyte.

"I merely asked the question because in cases of this kind I prefer that the parties should be of legal age, *though*, were they minors, I should feel it to be my duty to marry them all the same, because, I think, when a youth and maiden run away with each other, the best thing a Christian minister can do for them is to tie them together for life."

"I am a bachelor of twenty-two years of age, and my chosen wife is a widow of twenty-one. We take this simple method of getting married for economy and convenience, and for no other reason; for there is no one in the world who has either the power or the will to prevent us," said Craven Kyte.

"Very well, Mr. Lytton; I am ready to wait on you. I prefer, however, to solemnize marriage in the church, when possible. There must be witnesses also. And if you have none at hand, the sexton and some members of his family can serve."

Craven Kyte winced at the prospect of all those formalities.

"I thought that in the Quaker City marriage was a matter of less form," he said.

"Yes, among Quakers; but even they must have witnesses. If you and the lady will go into the church, I will join you there in a few minutes. You will find the doors open and the sexton in the building, preparing for the usual Friday afternoon service," said the rector.

And Craven Kyte again offered his arm to his companion, and led her out of the rectory, and into the church.

It was evident from all signs that the interior had just been swept out.

And an old man and a young woman whom Craven Kyte and his companion rightly guessed to be the sexton and the sexton's daughter, were busily engaged in dusting the pews.

Craven Kyte and Mary Grey sat down upon a front seat before the altar, to wait until the rector should make his appearance.

Mr. Borden did not keep them long in suspense. He soon entered, dressed in his surplice, and took his place within the chancel.

The candidates for matrimony advanced and stood before him.

He beckoned the sexton and the sexton's daughter to draw near and stand as witnesses.

And they came up, dusting brushes in hand, and stood staring while the ceremony was performed.

After the preliminary exhortation and prayers, the important questions were put:

"Will you, Alden, take Mary to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony?" and so forth, and so forth, and so forth.

To which Craven Kyte, turning pale at his own unwilling duplicity in answering to a false name, replied:

"I WILL."

"Will you, Mary, take Alden to be your wedded husband?" and so forth, and so forth.

To which Mary Grey answered firmly:

"I WILL."

And the ring was placed upon her finger. And the marriage vows were solemnly repeated, the last prayer said and the benediction pronounced.

It was all over.

"'*Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.*'"

The newly married pair were about to turn from the altar, when the rector said:

"Come with me into the vestry for a moment."

And they followed him into the vestry, attended by the two witnesses.

The rector made an entry into a large book, and then called upon the bridegroom and the bride to sign their names.

Again Craven Kyte turned pale as death as he registered the false name under which he had been married.

But his companion wrote her name in firm and steady characters.

Then the sexton and his daughter signed as witnesses.

The rector filled out a blank form, which he also signed, and caused to be signed by the two witnesses.

This he put into an envelope and handed to the bride.

Then he bowed to both, as a signal that all the forms had been complied with, and they were at liberty to depart.

"What was that paper the minister gave you, my dearest love?" whispered Craven, as they left the church.

"It was the certificate of marriage which the minister usually, and very properly, gives to the newly married woman," answered the bride.

"Oh, quite right, my angel," replied the doomed bridegroom, as he tenderly put her into the cab and took his seat beside her.

And then he clasped her to his honest heart in an ecstasy of love, and went off into the most extravagant rhapsodies about his happiness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Evening—In Youth and Old-Age.

There are two periods in the life of man in which the evening hour is peculiarly interesting—in youth and old-age. In youth we love it for its mellow moonlight, its million of stars, its thin, rich and shooting shades, its still serenity; amid those who can commune with our loves, or twine the wreaths of friendship, while there is none to bear us witness but the heavens and the spirits that hold their endless Sabbath there—or to look into the deep bosom of creation, spread abroad like a canopy above us, and look and listen till we can see and hear the waving and melting songs of other worlds. To youth, evening is delightful; it accords with the flow of his light spirits, the fervor of his fancy, and the softness of his heart. Evening is also the delight of virtuous age; it seems an emblem of the tranquil close of busy life. Serene, placid and mild, with the impress of its Creator stamped upon it, it spreads its quiet wings over the grave, and seems to promise that all shall be peace beyond it.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1872.

We always stop the LEDGER at the expiration of the year, or of the time for which it is paid, so that it is not necessary to ask a word in order to discontinue subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

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Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

What do You Think of My Handwriting?

A letter lies before us from a fair correspondent, in which the following request occurs:—

"Tell me may see how far my heart is from romantic about this time," will make yet another question, which I suppose I would not think of if I were in love. Is its writing good?"

The writer is in error on this point. About three quarters of the letters we receive, both from young ladies who are dying in love for somebody, concludes with this question: "What do you think of my handwriting?" No love affair plunges a young lady so deeply into anxiety or grief, as to destroy her solicitude about her hand-writing.

If we were to print all the letters which are addressed to us containing this inquiry, we should have but little room for other matter. The juxtaposition of the inquiry to some subject entirely foreign to it is often amusing, and sometimes very absurd.

As we cannot answer these letters in detail, we will make some general remarks which will be applicable to all of them.

The first requisite to good writing is plainness—legibility. The object of writing is to be read. The easier it is to read the better. How much the pleasure of reading is enhanced when matter is written in a clear, legible hand, every one knows.

Flourishes and ornaments are not excellences in writing. They are apt to produce obscurity, and then they become an absolute defect and detriment. This is the great objection to the hands taught by writing-masters. They are showy, and are called splendid, but they are almost illegible. A letter written in such a hand is read slowly and with difficulty. It has often seemed to us strange that there should not be written a system which would teach a plain, legible, common-sense hand.

Every one should take pains to write well. An idea has sometimes prevailed that a fine, legible handwriting was indication of greatness. This is nonsense. It is the attribute of true greatness to do everything as well as possible; and poor writing is no more a mark of superiority, than is a statement made in broken grammar.

Very many of the correspondents who address to us the inquiry about their handwriting write very well. We answer, however, may be made for all, that there is no danger of writing too well. It should be the taken not only to acquire, but to preserve a good hand. The general views which we have presented may add somewhat toward establishing a correct standard of excellence; and the first point toward accomplishing anything is to understand distinctly what is the object which you aim at.

The Good Men of Pennsylvania.

If we may judge by the Philadelphia papers, and by the speeches and reports made in the Legislature and Municipal Council—mind, this is not our opinion—the number of bad men in public life in that State does not bear a very great proportion to the number of good men. So many are proved, or at least represented by Pennsylvania politicians and editors, to be bad, that one would think there could be very few left of a different character.

An old lady once undertook to pick over some white beans for dinner. She got on very slowly. As early frost had blighted the crop, and the beans had hardly been worth harvesting at most seasons, she found about twenty poor ones to every sound one. At length she concluded to reverse the order of the work, and pick out the good ones. These were so very few that her task was soon done.

It strikes us that the Legislature of Pennsylvania might learn wisdom from our simple. Its session might be much shortened, and its labors lightened, if, instead of publishing to the world its long list of evil doers, it would just pick out the few good men—if there are any—and worthy office in the State, and inscribing their names on a roll of honor.

The Shooting of a Lawyer in His own House.

ROCHESTER, April 29.—At about twelve o'clock last night a burglar entered the dwelling-house in the west, to steal, and who, when interrupted, deliberately shoots at another, so in the case reported in the above dispatch, should never be permitted to go at large again, whether his shot happens to prove fatal or not.

"Thrown on My Own Resources."

We are in daily receipt of letters from all parts of the country in which the writer says, "Having been thrown on my own resources for support, I have come to the conclusion"—and then follows a statement of his written case, which is usually a melancholy one. According to the letters we receive, it seems that, in many cases, when people are "thrown upon their own resources," they really have no resources at all, and then for the first time they find it out. That is to say, when brought to the test of showing and doing what they know, they discover that they in fact do not know and cannot do anything with that directness and precision which will win bread. It often happens that they cannot even write a good hand, nor spell correctly; their composition is defective; they have no practical knowledge of the commodities of trade and commerce, nor of the modes in which business of any kind is carried on; they are, in fact, utter novices in every useful respect, and have to begin life anew. This they find to be a hard matter. In truth, it is a hard matter.

But, what is the remedy for it? One remedy would be, for every person to learn some good thing thoroughly. If men and women who, at twenty-five, thirty or forty, find themselves thrown on their own resources, could only command some practical, wealth-bring thing—some marketable skill, and were sure of it, it is a frank to say that they would not poke their noses stuck up in the air as though they were above bowing, but would be quick to adapt to break through their resources when they found them closed.

A cadet at West Point is drilled in all the duties and technicalities of a soldier's life, and ordinary grades, as well as in those of a responsible officer. He is fitted to be a man of trade thoroughly, and to be able, when called upon so resources, to meet any emergency in a practical and efficient way. The same habit and discipline should be applied in domestic and civil life. Boys for girls should learn early and thoroughly taught to perform substantially whatever they undertake. The ability to take right hold of practical, everyday affairs, and to do them with skill and promptness, is not only an invaluable accomplishment, but a source of happiness.

All About a Watch Chain and Badge for a Mayor.

The Mayor of Dublin, in England, thought that his august personage was an ornament to the borough. In turn, his borough ought to ornament his august personage. The particular ornaments which the Mayor of Dublin would be appropriate to him were a gold chain and badge. The borough, in its wisdom, that its public services should go rewarded by some such mark of esteem from his neighbors. He looked the thing up in "General Purposes Committee"—a pretty compendious but significant name—and found, to indicate—and the General Purposes Committee passed a resolution accordingly—that the Council the necessity of obtaining a gold chain and badge, and recommended that the same should be purchased at a cost not exceeding one hundred pounds. The resolution was carried and submitted. The one selected was a little curious. It consisted of "Coins, a bale of were to be as follows: "Coins, a bale of wool, the arms of the city, a harp, a crown, a wheat, and on the left a bear."

But here an obstacle was interposed. The ratepayers, whether on account of the obscurity of the device, or of the high cost—for only the present Mayor will wear it—took up the matter before the Vice-Chancellor. But, on some ground or other, they were defeated, and the officer got his gold trappings, as officers get whatever they can get.

Trouble with Mexico Ahead.

Advices from the Rio Grande indicate that war may at any time be brought on between Mexico and the United States by the ferocious rapacity of the Mexican chieftains in that section. As a rule, Mexicans do not bother us nowadays. When a Mexican takes to becoming importunate he makes his presence felt with alacrity. He never thinks of going honestly to work to earn his living; if he does so, such a course would be degrading. As the African chieftain says, he's a fighting man, and should I go hungry so long as my sisters have children that I can eat ?" so the Mexican chieftain asks, "Why should I work for my living so long as the Texans ever do?" Having been driven out of Texas, he has a grudge against the Texans which he does not seem to let their presence taken from them without resistance, and so murder is added to robbery; men are shot in sheep and cattle driven off, but bosses are burned, and the Texans laid waste. It is all in human nature—certainly not in American human nature—latent in every man, and it rages. Hence retaliatory raids on Mexico by the most peaceful embodiment of all the border.

The Equitable Life Insurance Association.

We are not very favorably inclined toward Life Insurance, as our readers are aware. At the same time, we do not wish to throw the cold water of ridicule in the minds of others our own particular views on this subject; and we appreciate the motives of those who, for safe insurance, of insuring in a safe and substantial institution, prefer a company to us. Our reason to believe is the Equitable Life Assurance Association of this city. The names of its norms and other names in the directorship are a guarantee of the legitimate of others.

I am aware, Madam, that your son is a man of business. He is not a fighting man by any means, but he is of course an exception, owing to his peculiar position. I would prefer to be quite agreed with you, that "blood is thicker than water," but I feel my self bound to have not out—if so will his son. So you and I will not quarrel, but will leave him to do as he there might be a difference of opinion between us. I am not the author of Mr. Beecher's letter, but I am responsible for its genuineness. Now, don't be afraid of Mr. Beecher! I used to go to school to his sister.

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GEN. HUMPHREY MARSHALL, who recently died in Kentucky, was a relative of Chief-Justice Marshall, family with Chief-Justice John Marshall.

The Louisville Courier-Journal says Justice Marshall gives the following account of a dream Gen. Humphrey Marshall had concerning a duel which was not realized:

"He was at the Capitol Hotel, Frankfort, Ky., Gov. Carlisle and three other friends were with him. Suddenly he exclaimed, 'I am shot through the heart!' and a singular and unnatural pallor overspread his face. He was carried before Judge Duvall, the nominee of the Labor Reform Convention. My father, Gen. Marshall, Gov. Carlisle, and others, Gov. Carlisle, among the rest, and made counsel that courtly manner of it,' said the president, 'for the country is on the eve of great events, with which you are to be associated. Behold!' I looked around, and saw before me a political convention assembled, and near below me a political procession, and from rear to rear I beheld my own name recorded well on it. 1860 was reached, and after that it was seen no more. I shall live till 1868. John-ny, you and I will be in the White House.'

"Gen. Marshall was even after the recital of his dream 'life's dream was over,' and a great man's career on earth was closed."

WAITING FOR YOUR IDEAL LADY.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BALTIMORE, March 10th, 1872.

DEAR SIR:—I would like to know, through the New York Ledger, the following question: Should a young man defer matrimony till he sees his ideal of a woman, or other than genius, should he seek an ideal of a lady for a wife? My answer to the letters we receive, it seems that, in many cases, when people are "thrown upon their own resources," they really have no resources at all, and then for the first time they find it out. That is to say, when brought to the test of showing and doing what they know, they discover that they in fact do not know and cannot do anything with that directness and precision which will win bread. It often happens that they cannot even write a good hand, nor spell correctly; their composition is defective; they have no practical knowledge of the commodities of trade and commerce, nor of the modes in which business of any kind is carried on; they are, in fact, utter novices in every useful respect, and have to begin life anew. This they find to be a hard matter. In truth, it is a hard matter.

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"BE GOOD TO YOURSELF."

BY JOHN O. SAXE.

"Good-bye! good-bye!" the driver said,
As the coach went off in a whirl;
And the comment passed from one to another head:
"Be good to yourself, my girl!"

Ah! many a body and soul I've heard;
From many an earnest word
Of solemn and worldly farewell word,
When strangers came to part!

And I've heard a thousand merry quips,
And many a quaint device,
And many a homely phrase from lips
That all sincerity spoke;

And many a bit of good advice
In smooth proverbial guise;
And many a wish—of little price—
But never a word like this!

But among how the human soul
Is apt to go astray,
Still manners to its self-control,
The greatest good of all—

Especially, I protest,
"Mid many a shining toast,
I like the merry sentiment best—
"Be good to yourself—my girl!"

THE DEAD ALIVE.

SINGULAR HISTORY OF CHARLOTTE SOPHIA, PRINCESS OF BRUNSWICK, WIFE OF ALEXIS, SON OF PETER THE GREAT.

In 1821, the Lord Byron, a nobleman of great literary taste, and well known in the circles of diplomacy, published a statement which created considerable excitement in the different courts of Europe. Described by the author with accuracy, it was impossible for the Russian government either to ignore the assertions made, or to remain under it. The story, if it was officially denied, as it had previously been, would be received as the truth, based on his lordship's paper. One thing is certain, that the romantic and unfortunate lady proved to be the best informed upon such matters, it was generally believed in France than any other person.

Now, in his history of Russia, dwells with considerable length upon the subject. So does Prince Theodore Labanoff.

Voltaire, who was remarkable for anything but truth, and never went out of the court of Russia, positively denies the story; asserts that the supposed princess was an Italian woman of the name of Sophia Dunaldeen, who bore a strong resemblance to the wife of the Czarowitch. He says that she appeared at Wolfenbuttel some years after the Prince's death, and claimed to be received as his widow and Princess of Russia. Voltaire adds, that *she went away, a large sum of money being privately given her.*

Impostors are not usually so generously dealt with by princes.

Again, the friend of the Regent, Duke of Orleans, in his amusing memoirs mentions the death of the Princess, which he states to have been caused by a blow from her brutal husband when in a paroxysm of passion. He says:

"We have quoted the above authorities to show that is is no mere effort of the writers to create a sensation. It is well known to our readers, but a statement founded upon facts which have been known for years, and never denied.

Lewis Adolphus, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, married Christina, Princess of Oldenburg, who bore him three daughters, and died in childbirth.

The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau, and was slumbered through a peaceful life of Austrian and Prussian alliances.

The second daughter, Antoinette, became the wife of Ferdinand Albert, Duke of Brunswick Lunenburg. Their children appear to have been quite an uneventful as that of her eldest sister.

But less happy was the fate of Charlotte Sophia, the youngest daughter. She married, on the 14th of August, 1711, Alexis Petrowitz, the son of Alexis Petrowitz, eldest son of Peter the Great.

The marriage was celebrated at Torgau, in Germany, with bridegroom's father, then in the second year of his age, the unfortunate bride was sixteen years.

History affords abundant evidence to prove that Alexis was a monster in the form of human creature. He was the only son of the first wife of his father, but not one spark of his mother's nature. He opposed himself openly to the reforms the Czar was endeavoring to introduce into Russia. He was in constant feud with his aunt the Grand Duchess Sophia, who had made a successful attempt to usurp and take the life of her brother; visited both the Czar and Czarina with the most bitter hatred, strong her husband, at the command of his father, to the most degrading offices.

Alexis was dangerous living in temper with the iron will of a man like Peter the Great. His wife, some years after the death of the Czar, brought him to trial, and caused him to be condemned to death; but, through the influence, according to some accounts, with his father, who was then on his death-bed, the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, it is said, because the Prince pretended, on the scaffold, to have repented of his crimes, and we have nothing to do with.

There is a law invariably observed in the Russian family of Romanoff, that a prince of Dukes marries the lady most conform to the Greek Church. The Princess Charlotte, sister of the Princess of Wales, twice went through the ceremony of adjuring the Protestant faith. The first time was on the occasion of her marriage with the Grand Duke of Russia, the late Czarowitz, who died at Pisa. The second occasion, on her marriage with the Emperor Nicholas, the present Czar.

The unfortunate Charlotte Sophia experienced the brutality of her husband very soon after her marriage. The circumstance took place on the birth of their first child, a young bride, in a conversation with General Count Tolstoy, the Russian ambassador to the court, in which the latter endeavored to explain that the Czar could not be held responsible for conduct of his son, as formed in his name. Alexis reproached her severely.

On another, when the Russian custom was adopted to the effect that the husband should kiss their wives, she incautiously permitted the Count Tolstoy to salute her cheek. The Czarevitch, who was present, started up in a fury, and struck the Count a violent blow, saying, "I shall not be cuckolded by my father."

"This will teach you, Madame, not to turn your cheeks to the embraces of this and every time."

The Empress Catherine, the wife of the Czar, appears to have been kind to Charlotte Sophia. She became a great favorite with her with her munificent sufferings.

But the unfortunate princess her hard fortune, and her husband was not to be softened.

My father married a peasant, while I have been compelled to wed a princess."

On the birth of her son the position of the unfortunate princess became more terrible. Of her infant never deigned to visit her, and left her to the care of her attendants. Not a friend near her. She was not allowed to receive the visits of her own family. Her child, an infant was conveyed to the apartments of the Empress Catherine, and there it was kept with the permission of the heir of the throne of Russia. So great was the aversion of Alexis for the mother of his child, that he is stated to have made no less than three attempts to remove her by poison. Happily the sufferer received on each occasion such speedy succor from one of her attendants, a German, that her life was preserved.

The last attempt to which the Princess was again likely to become a mother, her husband attacked her with greater fury than ever, knocked her down, kicked her as she lay senseless upon the ground, and left her bathed in her blood. He then set forth for one of his hunting seats, without designing to make any inquiry after his unhappy victim.

A premature confinement followed the outrage.

The unwonted sufferings of Charlotte Sophia excited the pity of her attendants, who, with the assistance of the Countess of Konigsmarck, mother of the celebrated Maurice de Saxe, resolved to deliver the Princess forever from the tyranny of her ferocious monster. A courier was sent after him announcing the death of his wife.

The grief of the Czarevitch was so great for his immediate interment as privately as possible, thinking by speed alone to prevent the horrible treatment he had subjected his victim to from becoming publicly known.

This injunction rendered what followed comparatively easy.

The Countess of Konigsmarck, who was on a visit to the court, the wife of the Chancellor at the time, was a woman of intelligence, courage, and equal to the emergency. It was by her assistance that the unhappy Princess was carried off in the dead of night in one carriage, and before her. She collected the gilded slavery before her. She collected the most valuable money and jewels could be found in the palace, and gave her an old and trustworthy man-servant of her own and a female domestic to attend her. They succeeded. Charlotte Sophia arrived safely in Paris.

Meanwhile the funeral of the deceased took place as privately as her husband had desired. Alexis, dressed in the habit of a monk was placed in the coffin. Several of the principal officers, however, knew the part they had taken in saving their mistress, and followed her.

Alexis appears to have been furious at the disappearance of the jewels of his victim, and the money, but he was forced to be silent, at the time the diplomatic agents of Russia, as the Countess of Konigsmarck, were busily engaged in attempting to recover them. Subsequently, he made inquiries under it, but never ceased. Either the mystery was unveiled, or he was satisfied.

The Princess Charlotte Sophia remained in Paris, where the danger of being recognized by the Russian agents was considerable, lived, longing to the company of the Indies, to whom the King of France had given the title of Princess Leonisina Louisiana, otherwise called the Princess Lees, and with a company which, for hundred Germans, from Orleans.

Here she lived for years, where she had fled for shelter, Charlotte Sophia was recognized. Her son, Peter II., succeeded to the throne of Russia, and the Princess Charlotte Sophia lived in the service of the Czar. He appears to have been kind to her, and generously supported and kept the discovery a secret.

The Czar Peter II. never invested the affairs of the illustrious exile, satisfied of the impossibility of her ever returning to Russia, that they should unite their means and form a common fund, and so they did. The fund was offer was accepted, and the following plan was adopted. Charlotte Sophia died not only without the knowledge of her husband, but also unto conduct, but, on the death of the Czar, Peter II.

Thus was united to a simple captain of Russian Guards, who was in the service of the Emperor of Germany, and who had been of great use to the Princess Sophia in the world. Most nobly did the husband act by his wife, and the fortune bequeathed to him by his wife's death became necessary existence.

Although he was the issue of the royal lady's second marriage. She nursed the infant heir to the throne, and was his governess and guardian.

The Chevalier D'Auban, after several years of widowhood, married a second time. By a disease which required the best surgical aid in Paris, he was compelled to go to that city, and there he died, leaving a widow and two daughters. Here the Princess was recognized by Peter II., who, with the Czar Nicholas, had preserved her and assisted her flight from Russia.

The Marechal impacted her out story to the Princess Lees, and the Princess again contacted with the family of the illustrious exile, and the Princess Lees, and the Princess again contacted with the family of the illustrious exile, her husband and child, whom the King of France had generously bequeathed to the protector.

Charlotte Sophia spurned the offer, but appears to have lamented in order to gain time, for the Princess, and her husband, the faithful wife and mother placed herself under the protection of the Princess of Russia

STRANGERS.

BY ESTELL LYON.

Hast forgotten me, Norwegian,
Just as darkness settled down,
How the twilight fooled us waiting,
Strangers, in the olden town,

While the modern watch was mended
As the society near the hill
Gathered for the evening's delight,
I the other, both quite still?

With no hint or revelation
That our cold eyes ever crossed—
That your life had ever gathered
That which I had lived and lost.

Neither young nor bonded,
Neither old, with much to show;
Yet we met accidentally; why,
Only fate may know.

Then we talked of wind and weather,
Coaches over crags ignored,
While the burnt gas grew brighter
While the coals in ashes turned.

Dotted isle and remembrance
Of the war, and what it cost;
Then the watch was suddenly mended
Till the sand its duration crossed.

In the firelight growing dimmer,
Suddenly aware your hand
Seemed to shine a wondrous story,
As these tender words were said:

"Then the dying lad spoke softly:
'Tell my mother, do not worry;'
Fortunely I'm not lonely
Loving her for all will keep."

"Quick! its name?" Oh, God, I thank thee!
Quick! its name, and where it sleeps?
Crushed out of mortal recollection
Then is lift my mourner's crown.

Where the dead we bid are sweet,
Yours the hand he held at last,
Yours the voice whose echoes lingered
Till the sounds of earth had passed.

Yet, O friend, I hope there answers you,
Though our ways at twilight crossed;
Never glanced the faded pathway
Pressed the record of the lost.

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE CLUB-FOOT SCOUT," "THE WHITE SCALP," "THE CLUB-FOOT SPAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DESPERATE DEFENCE.

It was fortunate for young Mark Heber that the Indians finished their attack upon the block-house at the critical moment when the flames of the fire-arrows on one life everwhelmed the building.

As it was, the loud alarm of the brawny savage who had sprung up in the darkness, clutching Mark's bridle rein with a grip of iron, roused Mark to his true danger instantly, and was then drowned in the outcries and yells issuing from the fort.

Mark drew his pistol and fired. The hand upon his bridle relaxed, and the savage sank out, with a wild shriek, bounded backward and fell. Mark struck his spurs into his horse with force, leaped the body lightly, and dashed away into the dense darkness, heeding not the fiery fate of his friends.

The two remaining Indians gnashed, uttering screams of menace and alarm, rushed after the young fugitive—one on foot, one hastily mounted—both firing after Mark in their fruitless eagerness.

But the thick blackness of gloom, with Mark in swift motion, soon hid him as well here from their sight. The chances were now all in his favor, they felt, and he should hit him.

From the moment in which he had ridden down the road of deadly savage assault, Mark's acid head knew no fear nor trouble. Cool, thoughtful, free, surrounded by a pall of gloom that hid him from his enemies, his heart beat steadily in his bosom, and his nerves lost not one speck of value, while he never lost sight of the main object of the dangerous journey of the ones fringing the river bank, and by the coughing and moaning of the wild animals, heading branchward.

His pursuers soon dropped off—the one on foot giving up a few rods, the one on horseback following him two or three miles, and then returning to the fort, the savage, completely outstripped and vanquished.

Mark knew that he was safe, and only Heber that he should hit him.

"If I can only hold out until day-break!" he prayed. "If they can only keep the savages at bay until I come with help, then I can help them."

And on he swept, a denser shadow amid the gloom, his wild eyes piercing the darkness for the right course.

Not a sound or presence returned to him, and not one of them undertook the task of informing Mark of the chief Indian's fatal escape of one of the settlers.

Mark's fine outlaw and of the Sioux chief were frightful beyond description.

A brief account of the attack follows:

Whitman and his fellow-members of the little band of settlers, on hearing the savage onslaught, never moved a muscle, but stood among the shadows outlying the bonfire, and a terrible hour ensued, indeed.

"They must have captured Heber," cried Whitman, in a pang. "They will torture him before our eyes perhaps."

"I see no sign of a prisoner," said the elder Whitman, peering out sharply.

"Then they have come approaches one of the Indians, and have bribed him to help them," said Jack, overhearing the last remark.

"Mark would not be taken alive," she said, in her resolute voice, suppressing a sob of grief and fell. "They have not captured him. See their expressions full of joy. He has escaped! Mark has escaped!"

"I believe the girl is right," said Mr. Whitman, after a close survey of the savages. "Mark has escaped, and the Indians, they are now fairly overwhelmed with anger and apprehension."

"Then," exclaimed Hopkins, the scout, said Horace Brown, "they will soon urge matters to a close, for their chances to overcome all the more desperate for their discovery. They will prepare for every means of fire of savage warfare. I will go up on the roof and watch the burning arrows."

He leaped at once upon the inside.

"Well," cried Mr. Whitman, "get me the old rifle loaded."

Young Whitman obeyed wonderingly.

Mr. Whitman, with the rifle in his useful old instrument, in imitation of the bugle blast of the scout, in no part of savage.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Mr. Whitman, his voice ringing through the fort, and thus commanding the savage's attention. "You have discovered that one of our number has escaped you all, and now you know it. I have something more to tell you. Blue Jack declares that he has killed one of your chief to you. It is Mark Heber who has escaped! Mark Heber, the son of Fort Heberton! Reflect on that!"

A cry of rage came from the midst of the savages.

Mr. Whitman blew again shrilly through his old clarion.

Again the enemy bent a listening ear.

"There is a man in your leading party here and there," said Whitman. "The boy you have captured. My troops will be here in five or six hours. We are stocked with ammunition, and can hold out for days, and the rest of the troops. Do you not get of the trail for yourselves. With the prospect of speedy relief, we are strong enough to fight double your present number."

There was a brief silence, and then the voice of Blue Jack, hoarse, yet full of volume, rained out from behind one of the blazing fires:

"We will go if you will give up to me the girl known as Gay Heber. I will promise that she shall not be harmed—but I must have her, (fires her up, or we'll take her!"

"Take her then!" said Whitman coolly. "We wouldn't give her up to you if we were to be forced to do it."

"You force us to extremities," retorted Blue Jack violently. "We do not need five hours, no, nor three, to reduce your block-house to ashes, your men to corpses, your women and children to slavery! You have said it—we'll take the girl!"

"Then you must come and get her!" cried Whitman.

"If we have to come to get to yield up Gay Heber to the fiendsome scoundrel," said Hopkins, addressing his friends, "do you suppose that Blue Jack could hold back his savage allies from the slaughter? Impossible! He could not do that, for more than one reason can spoil the fun of the borrowed beast who has both head and wants more. I tell you that Blue Jack is as treacherous as an Indian friends. If he had the girl in his power, he would not keep his word upon the roof of the fetting Heber give him the slip. One only hope, in case of the worst, is in having the girl with us. Blue Jack has conceived some unconscionable grudge against the girl, and he won't look upon her with favor. I had rather see her dead than I should submit to—"

"I don't think that Blue Jack could kill us in cold blood," said Gay sorrowfully, "but his passion for me is that of fear and hatred. He would be glad to see me dead, I am sure."

There was no time to prolong the discussion. A shower of bullets came hurtling through the air, and themselves in the block-house, causing the savages to retreat the rest of the night with no provocation.

"What new mischief are they up to?" asked Whitman musically. "They are too quiet to please me."

A sudden lurid glow upon the eastern side of the fort answered him.

"They've fired it, girl," Whitman, "they've been on our house."

Gay's pale face grew set and stoned along.

A pang shot through her heart.

"If Mark Heber has escaped and is alive," she said, "he will come to the rescue with help. Oh, God, I thank thee! Oh, God, I thank thee!"

Whitman looked at her curiously.

"There is not any insane reference to Mark Heber in that, my daughter?" he asked.

"No, no, no!" she cried, in a wild voice. "I am not insane! I am not insane!"

"Then you have not been driven to it by the darkness," said Whitman, "and you will not be driven to it. Be calm, girl, and be ready to fight, if necessary, for your life. Even now the savages are—"

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"Look out for the roof!"

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MARK HEBER OR HIS RETURN FROM THE FORT.

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"I don't believe he could find his way to Mark's house in the darkness, Whitman," said Hopkins wearily, coming up to his friend. "The fact would be almost impossible, I assume to say that the ammunition is low. We have not enough to stand a siege of days. Should the savages succeed in setting fire to the roof, we do without ammunition?"

"We must do it," said Whitman hoarsely.

Hopkins staggered back to his post.

He had told the truth in saying that the savages had been kept back from an open attack upon the block-house only by the constants from the loop-holes, but they had also been kept back from the attack by the fear of long and steady return-fire from McPherson, who had exhausted some forty rounds from a rifle home to the settlement, and at his leisure was picking off the savages at the distance of two hundred yards from Mark's house, who moved toward the ladder, staggered, and bounded against the logs of the block-house pale as death.

Whitman and others of the settlers, after greeting Heber, hastened forward to speak to the wounded Indian.

Gay Heber sprang lightly down the ladder to the ground, and ran to the side of Whitman.

"Is Mark safe, dear boy?" said Gay at last, in a sort of yearning pity and tenderness. "You have escaped from the fort, and left Mark's house with no, and I will take care of you."

"I am safe, Gay," said Mark, as he sprang down the ladder, and the young pair wasted no time in words, but hurried into the fort, where the wounded Indian was placed upon some blankets and pillows from the block-house, and Mark and Gay were lowered down swiftly.

Gay Heber, without a word, hurried into the inner room, which, as the reader knows, was a room within a room, and, before the surrounding gallery, as we have termed the inner room of the block-house, and around the centre of the building, and there was a bed, upon which Mark Heber was placed, and Gay knelt down beside him, and, with a pan of coffee, and to heat a portion of antiseptic herbs, began to bathe the injured arm with bread, to her foster-brother.

"Oh, Gay, I am safe," said Mark.

"Drink the coffee at least," urged Gay. "It will refresh you after the fight."

The youth allowed himself to be persuaded, and drank the coffee, and then Gay, with a sigh of relief, began to bathe the wound, and to bind in a motherly fashion the white, silken arm, and then, with a sigh of relief, began binding him, with a wise shake of her small head, to speak, and Mark Heber, with a sigh, asked his mother.

"Mother, affectionate discipline, Mark Heber to ask any questions until he had eaten and drunk, and

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savages a good scare, and perhaps battle. We shall see the troops again in a week."

"It's too late to go to work to-day," said Whitman, his thoughts reverting to the conclusion of the settlement. "Our family in the west will make considerable difference. We have a number of old friends back in the fort and in the settlement, and to-morrow we'll go to bidding and say 'Good-by.' This is a little check on us at the outset, but I for one, am for sticking to the settlement. This trouble with the Indians and Blue Jack is already past, and I don't think they'll attack us again after the scare the soldiers will give them. The climate is lovely; the situation of our town is perfect; we have no water-power to run our saw-mills, but we can run them by steam as long and well as we need to, and when the railroad comes through Marcy, and the Northern Pacific on the south of the stockade. Who wants to abandon the settlement?"

No one did. Even the women voted to remain.

Mark Heber took Mr. Whitman aside at nightfall, and asked him, in his straightforward manner:

"Mr. Whitman, do you not think Gay and I ought to leave the settlement? We have been the cause of all the trouble we've had, and we may bring more."

"I'll risk it," said Whitman. "I tell you, Mark, you are not going to have any more of Blue Jack or if you do, he will not again attack the fort. The troops will frighten the cowardly red-skins out of this section of the country."

Mark shook his head.

"I know that Blue Jack will attempt to gain possession of Gay," he said, "if fool that he will. I know it, and you do, you want to say."

"Yes. The savages cannot return under some weeks, and then our men will be at work, and we will be on the alert. We will not suffer such an outrage as that with Gay to harm from that ruthless miscreant. I will not believe it. Suppose you go from us? You are impoverished; you have no wagon in which to transport your goods; you can only go on foot eastward or westward to some town where you must commence to recover your friendlessness. Say no more about going. You have suffered your fair to cure, and we have united our fate to yours. Let us cling to each other."

Mark gladly consented to the vote.

A grand was pasted on the stockade and upon the wall of the block-house during the night that followed. The women and children were in the log-fortress. The men, armed, and at their side, slept in the open air, wrapped in their blankets.

No alarm occurred during the night.

The following morning the men went to work zealously. The debris of the house-raising was cleared away, and by noon, when its two days it was finished, and Mr. Whitman but taken possession of it, he being the oldest of the settlers, and the right to it was not being generally acceded to him.

A second house was built, and this was occupied by the Hopkins family. Both houses stood upon the sites of the former ones, and presently resembled them, even to the details of construction.

All the men already selected had now been used, and the second of wood-chopping filled the air during the time following the noon.

A third house was in course of erection, upon the site of Mark Heber's home, when the soldiers returned from their expedition unsuccessful, except in having driven away the Indians.

Now won't be troubled with the savages again," said the officer in command, addressing Mr. Whitman and Mark Heber. They had marched back to their encampment, and received no orders to be absent from the fort over a week, unless such orders were countermanded, and it could do no good to go up to the Sioux reservation and engage in a fight with twenty times our number. The government will see to those Indians by and by. Meanwhile, hold on, abandon your settlement. That would be folly. You have a good thing here, and you will have. Your little fort is well garrisoned up. With a half-dozen more men to garrison it, you can defy any force of savages you are likely to encounter."

This address confirmed—if it had needed confirming—the resolution of the settlers not to abandon their villages.

The soldiers remained over night at the fort, and then marched away, and were seen no more by the settlers.

The pioneers proceeded with their task of rebuilding their houses, working early and late with unfailing energy.

A month and a fortnight days after the destruction of the settlement, the new houses, eight in number, were ready for their keys, were finished. Mark Heber's home, by day's work, was the last to be finished, and it was the twelfth day after the conflagration. It was a very comfortable residence, and better in its way than before.

During the progress of the building several wagon-loads had passed, wending their way to Milldale. None had stopped over night.

The new home of Heber and Mark had an dainty wall-hangings, but they had carried all their household goods with them, and could now be rendered them, using cloth and a few other articles which they had purchased after a pecuniary fashion at the store of the only boarder they, many of whom had been pressed into the service of the law and made to work in good earnest, a promotion that caused them to feel that they had been slighted.

Upon the thirteenth day after the conflagration the seven men who had been at work on the raids for stock, arrived at the settlement at noon in company with a wagon-train bound eastward.

They had been successful in their mission, and had brought home with them horses, mules and other stock.

They were received with great rejoicing.

Mark Heber's venture of money had brought him a good horse and mule-team, and a fine sheep and cattle—far more than he had expected—and he was now a rich man as he considered himself to be.

The returning settlers had brought home also another acquisition, a number of men who have regarded less favorably if they had known him at first.

This was a half-breed lad, a cripple, whom they had found at one of the stations on the route, and who had done one of the party a service, which was regarded by offering him a home as a token.

The fellow—he was not more than fifteen—was a mild-eyed, mild-tempered lad, with the apparent gentleness of a girl. His history, as he had given it to the settlers, was simple. He had told them that he was the son of a white hunter by his half-breed wife, and that he was now an orphan. He was well known at the station where he was found packed into the wagon, and was praised by the honest teamster in the highest terms for his skill as a hunter, his gentle and trustworthy, a not at all unprofitable in many ways, acquainted to act as a herder, and knowing all the whereabouts of savages and their customs, his mother having been one.

With some pride, Mr. Halsey introduced the girl-faced half-breed lad to the people of the town, the white children took to the boy at once.

"He can shoot with a rifle, and can hunt well enough, and was the mother of him."

"He can stay," he said. "He will serve as a herder, or with myself as an hunt. He can teach our boys to trap and shoot game. Let him stay."

The wagon train went on without him.

The boy, who had given his name as Lafette, or Leon, was a little shy at first, his manner suggesting that he was not to be trusted, but he quickly lost his grave reserve, and took upon gay liveliness, and a bright light shot into his black eyes.

"Who is that lady?" he asked one of the Halsey children, in a festive manner.

"That is Gay Heber," was the answer.

"She is pretty," said the boy, warmly, and crept nearer to Gay. And from that time, during the remainder of the day, he followed her around like a "tame cat" indeed, watching her with strange intentness. Before nightfall the settlers began to jest with Gay about her new admirer.

"The half-breed is to lodge with us, Gay," said Mark Heber, in a jocular tone. "Our family in the new house is complete. We have now a number of odd to accompany us to Milldale, and to-morrow we'll go to bidding. This is a little check on us at the outset, but I for one, am for sticking to the settlement. This trouble with the Indians and Blue Jack is already past, and I don't think they'll attack us again after the scare the soldiers will give them. The climate is lovely; the situation of our town is perfect; we have no water-power to run our saw-mills, but we can run them by steam as long and well as we need to, and when the railroad comes through Marcy, and the Northern Pacific on the south of the stockade. Who wants to abandon the settlement?"

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Mark shook his head.

"I know that Blue Jack will attempt to gain possession of Gay," he said, "if fool that he will. I know it, and you do, you want to say."

"Yes. The savages cannot return under some weeks, and then our men will be at work, and we will be on the alert. We will not suffer such an outrage as that with Gay to harm from that ruthless miscreant. I will not believe it. Suppose you go from us? You are impoverished; you have no wagon in which to transport your goods; you can only go on foot eastward or westward to some town where you must commence to recover your friendlessness. Say no more about going. You have suffered your fair to cure, and we have united our fate to yours. Let us cling to each other."

Mark gladly consented to the vote.

A grand was pasted on the stockade and upon the wall of the block-house during the night that followed. The women and children were in the log-fortress. The men, armed, and at their side, slept in the open air, wrapped in their blankets.

No alarm occurred during the night.

The following morning the men went to work zealously. The debris of the house-raising was cleared away, and by noon, when its two days it was finished, and Mr. Whitman but taken possession of it, he being the oldest of the settlers, and the right to it was not being generally acceded to him.

A second house was built, and this was occupied by the Hopkins family. Both houses stood upon the sites of the former ones, and presently resembled them, even to the details of construction.

All the men already selected had now been used, and the sound of wood-chopping filled the air during the time following the noon.

A third house was in course of erection, upon the site of Mark Heber's home, when the soldiers returned from their expedition unsuccessful, except in having driven away the Indians.

"We

"A HERO OF THE LUMINOUS HEART."

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

Some men are good-natured in spots; some are good-natured when they have their own way, or have fallen upon some good luck; some are good-natured when at ease, but cross when burdened; some are good-natured in company, and cross at home—all smiles and geniality in the store, and among customers, but lowering and moping at home. Now and then we find a real son of light—a hero of the luminous heart!—*Henry Ward Beecher, in the New York Ledger.*

"A hero of the luminous heart,"
Whose smile can heal the wound and smart,
Is he whose face warms "like the summer,"
"A son of light" and love is he,
At home, abroad, on land or sea;
"Good-nature," toned with sympathy
And joy, wait on the welcome comer.

For palpitating in his words
Is music, sweet as songs of birds—
His voice sounds like a benediction.
Sadness and grief take sudden flight,
As though the sun had risen at night;
His presence is a cheerful light
In the dim vale of sore affliction.

Oh, life is worth the living, when
We have the joy of happy men,
Within whose hearts is writ the charter
Of pure good-nature and its grace;
It beams like sunshine on the face;
It is a glory of the race;
It quenches flames about the martyr;

It is a cordial to the faint;
It is a halo to the saint;
It lifts the load from shoulders laden;
It bears the wounded from the ground;
It dries the tear and heals the wound;
It softens woe wherever found,
In heart of matron, man, or maiden.

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INAUGURATION OF HOSTILITIES.

The sudden entrance of Neva Wynde into the midst of her exulting enemies struck them dumb. Craven Black sat with hands outstretched, as they had grasped the letter Neva had snatched from them, his face growing livid, and a look of consternation glaring from his eyes. Octavia Black stood, half-leaning still over her husband's shoulder, as if turned to stone, the mocking smile frozen on her lips, a look of terror and defiance on her face. Mrs. Artress, retaining more of self-possession than the others, stared at Neva with unmistakable hatred and triumph. The treacherous French woman drooped her gaze, and grew pale and awe-stricken.

Neva, still clutching the letter to her bosom, looked at her enemies one by one, her red-brown eyes blazing. It seemed to those who looked upon her that the red flames leaped from her eyes of gloom, and they trembled before her. Her pure, proud face was deathly white, but it was stern and awful in its wondrous beauty, as she turned it from one to another in an expression of scathing contempt that stung Craven and Octavia Black to the very soul.

Then, without a word, but with her letter still clutched against her panting breast, the young girl swept from the room with the air, the step, and the haughty carriage of an insulted empress.

The conspirators heard her slowly ascend the stairs to her own room. They stared at each other for a brief space in an utter and terrible silence. Mrs. Craven Black was the first to speak, and her companions started as her voice broke the dead and awful hush.

"Well, upon my word!" she ejaculated, forcing a strange, hoarse, and uneasy laugh, that jarred on the ears of her fellow conspirators.

"A queen of tragedy!" muttered Mrs. Artress, referring to Neva's appearance and departure from their presence.

Craven Black sighed and scowled darkly. An ugly smile disfigured his mouth.

"Well," he said, "matters have been brought to a crisis. I would have preferred to keep up the semblance of friendship a while longer, but the girl has torn the masks from our faces. She has declared war—so war let it be. In the fight before us, the strongest must conquer!"

"I could not dream she would follow me," said the French woman deprecatingly. "I am not to blame. I am sure, very sure, that she is going to run away. She will leave the Wilderness to-night."

The ugly smile deepened upon Craven Black's visage.

"We will see!" he said, and his voice was terrible in its significance and threatening.

The French woman had read Neva's purpose aright.

The young lady went up to her room and closed her door, and held in the flames of the bright wood fire the torn and crumpled letter she had written to her lover, and which she had rescued from the hands of Craven Black. She let the small burning remnant of paper fall upon the blazing log, and watched the blue shrivelled ash wave to and fro in the current of air, and then whirl upward into the capacious chimney.

The letter thus destroyed, Neva, with a white face and wild eyes, set about her few preparations for departure. Her soul was in a tumult; her brain seemed on fire. She could not think or reason yet; she only knew that she longed to get away—that she *must* get away. She put on her round hat above her braids, and was about to throw about her a light shawl, when a sudden fierce rattling of the casements in the wind warned her that a night in late September in the Scottish Highlands was likely to be cold. She opened one of her trunks and dragged out to the light a pretty sleeved jacket of the soft and delicate fur of the silver fox, and this she put on. She took up her muff and dressing bag and hurried into the ante-room, panting and breathless, eager for the outer air.

The door opening from the ante-room into the hall was closed. Neva pulled it open—and found herself face to face with Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, Mrs. Artress and the French woman!

The girl recoiled an instant before this human barricade as if she had received a blow. Then she waved her hand in a haughty, commanding gesture, and said:

"Let me pass! Stand aside!"

"Not so fast, Miss Wynde," said Craven Black mockingly. "This lady, my wife, is your personal guardian, and she has the authority to control your movements—"

The girl's passionate eyes flashed stormily at her enemies.

"Let me pass, I say!" she cried, in a low, suppressed voice. "Attempt to detain me here, and I will arouse the household!"

"Do so," said Craven Black tauntingly. "The two stolid women in the kitchen cannot hear you; and if they could, they have been prepared for your outcries, and will not heed them. The sailors are on the yacht, in the loch below. You are out of the world up in this eagle's eyrie, and you may beat your wings against the bars of your cage till you drop dead, my pretty bird, but no one will heed your flutterings. Call, if you will. Try the effect of a shriek!"

He took a step nearer to Neva, who retreated before him, shrinking from his touch. He went after her into the room, his companions following. Celeste closed the door, and placed herself against it.

"Sit down, Neva," said Octavia Black, with a mocking intonation. "Lay aside your hat and sacque. Don't abandon us upon the very evening of our arrival in our new residence."

Neva made no answer, but Octavia shrank before the stern accusing of the girl's gloomy, passionate eyes.

"As your guardian," said Mrs. Black, recovering her self-possession, which had been momentarily shaken, "I desire to ask you where you were about to go when we intercepted you?"

"I might refuse to answer, madam," replied Neva, "but you know as well as I do that I was about to start for Inverness on foot, and that I intended to go back to Hawkhurst and to my friends. Unfortunately, Mrs. Black, you are my personal guardian; but Sir John Freise and my other guardians are desirous that I should choose another in your stead, and I shall now do so. Your character, madam, is at last revealed to me in all its moral hideousness. My recent vague suspicions of you have become certainties. Mr. Atkins was right in his distrust of you. But, madam, because my dead father loved and trusted you to the last hour of his life, because you have borne his honored name, I will spare you from blame and obloquy, and screen your ill-doings and ill-treatment of me even from my guardians. I will agree to thus screen you if you will stand aside and let me go forth now, at this moment."

"But, Neva," said Mrs. Black, "you will lose your way on the mountains; you will make a misstep over some cliff, or into some ravine; or you will die of cold and exhaustion long before you can reach Inverness. It is twenty miles as the crow flies. It is forty, as you would have to travel. We will not send you in the yacht. Your scheme of departure is impracticable. In fact, you cannot go."

"You mean to detain me here a prisoner?"

"Call yourself by what name you will," said Craven Black, "you cannot go."

The young girl looked around her desperately, like a hunted deer. There was no pity or sympathy in those hard and greedy faces. Had she been penniless, she would have been as free as the birds of the air; but being rich, her enemies looked upon her as their rightful prey.

"Are you a pack of outlaws?" demanded Neva, her young voice ringing through the room. "How dare you thus interfere with the liberty of an English woman?"

"You are not an English woman, but only an English girl," interrupted Octavia Black. "You are a minor, without right to liberty or the exercise of your own will. You are my ward, Neva, and as your guardian I command your obedience. How can you reconcile it with your conscience to rebel against your step-mother?"

"You are not my step-mother," cried Neva hotly. "When you ceased to be my father's widow, you ceased to be my step-mother."

"I think the law takes another view of such a case," said Mrs. Black. "But, at any rate, I am still your guardian, and as such I have a right to read all the letters you write or receive. I read your letter to Lord Towyn, and exhibited it to my husband—"

"And to your husband's cousin, and to your maid!" said Neva. "I am aware of all that. As to your right to examine my letters, I do not believe in it. Your action in opening my letter to Lord Towyn," and Neva's cheeks flamed, "and in reading its contents aloud to your familiars, was an act of the grossest indelicacy, and want of honor and moral principle. Any person with a grain of decency in his composition will confirm what I say."

Mrs. Craven Black was stung to fury by this outspoken declaration, its truthfulness giving it keener effect. She compressed her lips, being unable to speak, and hurried to and fro with uneven tread like a caged tigress.

"We will not discuss the right or wrong of Mrs. Black's very natural and proper act," said Craven Black. "She had the right to read your letter, and therefore did read it. I think you have no further fault to find with us than this?"

"Such an indelicate letter for a young lady to write," murmured Mrs. Artress, turning her eyes upward. "'My own dear Arthur.' I never was so shocked!"

Neva turned her back upon the woman without a word, and replied to Craven Black as if she had not heard his cousin speak.

"I have other fault to find with you, Mr. Black," the young girl said haughtily. "You and your wife have been false and treacherous to me from the beginning. You planned to come to this place before you left Hawkhurst, and you sent Mrs. Artress on in advance to prepare this house for your reception. Yet you pretended to me that we were to go by rail into Yorkshire. You allowed me to convey that impression to my friends, while you intended the impression to be a false one. The manner in which you proceeded from the railway station to Gravesend, and in which you have come to this place, has been secret and furtive, as if you meant to throw off pursuit. You have shamefully deceived me, and I regard your conduct and that of your wife, now that my eyes have been opened, as base, mean, and treacherous."

"Regard it as you like," said Craven Black airily, although his face flushed. "My dear child, you are beating against your bars like the bird in the cage to which I likened you. Don't waste your strength in this manner. Be reasonable, and submit to the power of those who have right and strength upon their side."

Mrs. Black paused in her walk before Neva, and said vindictively, and even fiercely:

"That is what you will have to do, Neva—submit! We are stronger than you. I should think your conscience would reproach you for rebelling against me in this manner. Did not your father a score of times enjoin you in his letters to love and obey me? Did he not in his will enjoin you to cling to me, and be gentle and loving and obedient to my wishes? Is it thus you respect his wishes and memory—"

"Stop!" cried Neva imperiously. "How dare you urge my father's wishes upon me? How dare you speak of respect to his memory, which you outraged at the time of your recent and third marriage, when you summoned my father's tenantry to a ball, and made merry in my father's house, thus virtually rejoicing in his death? I cannot hear my father's name from your lips, madam."

"Oh, you can't!" sneered Octavia Black. "You will have to bear whatever I may choose to say of him; let me tell you that, Miss Neva. You may fling off my authority and your late father's together, if you choose, but his last letter to you should be held sacred by you, and its injunctions fulfilled to the letter, as sacred commands from the dead to the living."

"That last letter!" said Neva. "The letter written by Craven Black, with your assistance and connivance! Ah, you start. You see that I comprehend you at last—that I have fathomed your wickedness! That letter, now in the hands of Lord Towyn or Mr. Atkins, or Sir John Freise, emanated from Craven Black's brain and hand. It was a clever forgery, but, thank God, I know it to be a forgery! My father could never have so coolly and easily disposed of his daughter's future. He never wrote that letter!"

The girl spoke in a tone of such firm conviction, as if she knew whereof she affirmed, that the discomfited plotters made no attempt to deny her assertion. The Blacks looked at each other darkly, and read in each other's eyes incitement to continue in their wickedness with unabated courage. Mrs. Artress looked on, evilly exultant. She had never liked the heiress of Hawkhurst, with her dainty beauty, her piquant witchery of face and manner, and with all the wealth that seemed so boundless. Mrs. Artress was jealous, envious, and full of hatred of her, and her greed of money had been enlisted against the young girl.

There was a brief pause, during which Neva sat down, laying aside her muff and dressing bag. Presently she said:

"I understand you now, as you know. I trust that you understand me. I will not trouble you to deal more in subterfuges and deceptions. I comprehend that I have been decoyed here for a purpose, and that I am now your prisoner. What is your purpose against me?"

"We have no purpose against you, Neva," said Octavia Black quite calmly, and even pleasantly. "You deceive yourself. We saw you anxious to plunge into marriage with Lord Towyn, but disapproving the match, I have brought you here. I stand in the relation of a parent to you, and use a parent's authority, as I have a right. I have other designs for you. A worthy and accomplished young man, the son of my present husband, has solicited your hand in marriage, and I am anxious that you should enter the same family with myself. We will not coerce you; but I am sure, after a residence more or less prolonged at this Wilderness, you will be glad to marry Rufus Black and go back into society. You shall have sufficient time for consideration. I am ready to sacrifice myself and remain here all winter, if necessary to bring you to the desired view of the subject."

"One thing we may as well make plain," said Craven Black deliberately. "When you leave this house, Miss Wynde, it will be as the promised bride of my son."

Neva's eyes flashed mutiny.

"Is Rufus Black a party to this scheme?" she demanded.

"No," said Mr. Black promptly. "He knows nothing of my designs. I have told him to hope that you will relent, and he thinks that his step-mother has unbounded influence over you, which she will use in his behalf. Rufus is a poor, weak young fellow, with all his desirable qualities, and he would sooner cut his throat than force you into a marriage with him. No; Rufus is at Hawkhurst, where I have ordered him to remain until our return, or until he hears from me. He supposes us to be in Yorkshire. We are ready to start for your home with you any day when you shall have given us your oath that this visit to the Highlands shall be kept secret by you, and that you will marry Rufus on your return to Hawkhurst. These are our terms."

"I have said upon what terms I am willing to keep your villainy secret," said Neva haughtily. "My condition is that I am immediately allowed to go free. I shall not repeat that offer after to-night. I shall never agree to your terms. I shall never marry Rufus Black. I am betrothed to a noble and honorable gentleman, and I regard my promise to him as sacred as any oath. In short, Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, I will stay here until I die before I will yield to your dominion, or perjure myself by a cowardly oath."

"Very well," said Black. "It only remains to see which will hold out the longest, besiegers or besieged. Octavia, let us go. A night of reflection may bring our young lady to terms."

"I have a last word to say," exclaimed Neva, arising, her young face full of a bitter and passionate rebellion against her enemies. "You have not fairly counted the cost of your present undertaking, Mr. and Mrs. Black. The heiress of Hawkhurst, the only child of the late Sir Harold Wynde, the betrothed wife of one of the wealthiest young noblemen in Great Britain, cannot disappear in a manner so mysterious without exciting attention. I shall be sought after far and wide. My three guardians will set the officers of the law upon my track. Even now it is quite possible my friends may be on their way to this place. I shall be rescued from your hands, and you will be rewarded with the punishment and the ignominy you deserve."

"You believe all this?" cried Craven Black. "You think I am clumsy enough to permit myself to be tracked? How little you know me! I defy all the detectives in the world to trace me. I did not buy the yacht. A friend bought it in his own name, and provisioned it. The three sailors on board the yacht will never see a newspaper, will not stir out of the loch, and will see no one. I have attached them to me by a free use of money, and I have a hold upon them in knowing their past. If the officers of the law were to trace you to the loch below us, the men would not dare to reveal your whereabouts, for fear of being held as conspirators against your liberty. The two women-servants in this house never stir off the plateau. The cabman I hired to convey us from the London railway station to Gravesend, I discovered, in my conversation with him, was employed for that day alone, to take the place of the cabman who was ill. The fellow told me he was a navvy, bound for a voyage the next day, and he wished he could sail our yacht instead of going out to Australia in a steamer. You see how my tracks are covered? Your help must come from yourself, not from Lord Towyn. I have no more to say at present. If you choose to come to terms, you can send Celeste to my wife at any moment. Permit me to wish you a good-night."

He approached her as if to shake hands. Neva gathered up her effects and retreated into her room. The next instant a key was inserted in the lock, and the bolt was shot home. Neva was in truth a prisoner.

"Celeste, you will occupy this room," said Mrs. Black, to her maid, "and you must sleep with one eye open. Miss Wynde is desperate, and may attempt to pick the lock, or to escape by one of her windows."

"I am not afraid of pursuit," said Mr. Black meditatively, "but I would like to throw the pursuers upon a wrong scent. I wish I could get Lord Towyn over upon the Continent, with that sharp-eyed Atkins. How can we contrive to give them the impression that we are gone upon a Continental tour?"

They pondered the question for many minutes.

"I have it," said Celeste at last. "I have a sister who lives in Brussels, and who works in a milliner's shop in the Rue Montagne de la Cour. You shall write a letter for Mademoiselle, Mr. Black, in her very handwriting, and date the letter Brussels, and I will send it under cover to my sister, to be posted at Brussels. Yes, my faith, we have it. One of the sailors shall post my letter, with its inclosure, from Inverness. It is well, is it not?"

The plan suited Mr. and Mrs. Black, who resolved to act upon it. The whole party adjourned to the drawing-room. Mrs. Craven Black brought forth several letters she had formerly received from Neva while at the Paris school, and which she had preserved for possible use. Mr. Black still retained the envelope to the letter Neva had addressed to her lover, and which he had intercepted. With these materials, and his skill at counterfeiting, Craven Black set to work to write a letter in Neva's name, and dated at Brussels. While he was thus engaged, Mrs. Black supplying him with suitable paper and ink, the French maid wrote to her sister at Brussels, requesting her to stamp and forward the inclosed missive. Octavia Black gave her attendant a Bank of England note to inclose in payment of the service.

The double letter was finished and sealed that night, and Craven Black went to Inverness the next day in the yacht and posted it.

This then was the letter which had been brought up to London to Lord Towyn by his steward, and which the young Earl, having read, had so instantly and vehemently pronounced a forgery.

But though it failed of its object, and did not deceive the keen-witted young lover as to its origin, it did not enlighten him as to Neva's whereabouts. He continued his search for her, calling in the aid of professional detectives, Mr. Atkins devoting his time also to the search, but they failed to find a clue to the missing young girl. And she, hidden in the far-off Scottish wilds, among mountain peaks and in a secluded rocky wilderness, looked in vain for her lover's coming. Her enemies were indeed more cunning than she had dreamed, and it seemed indeed as if the words of Craven Black would prove true, and the matter between the "besiegers and the besieged" would become a question of resistance. Which would be the first to yield to the loneliness and gloom of the Wilderness, and to the rigors of the swiftly approaching Highland winter?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MRS. BLIGHT ENTERS UPON HER MOURNING.

The sudden death of Mrs. Wroat proved a severe shock to poor Lally Bird, who had grown to love the eccentric, but kind-hearted old lady with a daughter's affection. She hurriedly dressed herself, and came down to Mrs. Wroat's chamber, pale and awe-struck, with a horrible sense of desolation and misery. It seemed as if a fatality attended her—that those whom she loved were in some way doomed. Her parents were dead, her young husband had been taken from her, and now her great-aunt had died, and she was again alone. She was not selfish in her grief, but she could not help thinking of her own bitter loneliness, as she bent over the still figure, and softly and reverently touched the straying locks of gray hair, and pressed her lips to the shrivelled mouth from which the angel smile seemed slowly fading.

Peters had by this time regained her self-command. There was much to do, and it devolved upon her to do it. Her tears must wait for a more convenient season. She was anxious that "all things should be done decently and in order," and that due respect should be given the dead mistress she had so loved. Her first act then, after arousing Lally and the servants, was to dispatch the footman to the family physician, and to Mr. Harris, Mrs. Wroat's lawyer.

The physician came first. He showed no surprise at the summons, and acknowledged to Peters that he had expected it before. He could only confirm the discovery of Peters that the old lady was dead.

The lawyer arrived while the doctor was in the house. Mrs. Wroat had requested that Mr. Harris should assume control of her affairs after her death, and he proceeded to seal her desk and to take charge of her private papers, while he gave directions for the management of the household while the dead should remain in the house. An undertaker was sent for, and all the grim preparations for the sepulture, so terrible to surviving friends, was entered upon.

The next morning's papers contained the obituary notice of Mrs. Maria Wroat, relict of the late John Wroat, banker, with a statement of her age and of the time appointed for the funeral.

The next afternoon brought to the door of the mansion in Mount street a cab, from which alighted Mr. and Mrs. Blight of Sandy Lands. They sounded the knocker pompously, ringing the bell at the same moment. The footman hastened to give them admittance.

"I see by the morning's papers that my dear aunt is dead, Toppen," said the Canterbury lawyer, who was known and detested by Mrs. Wroat's servants. "Why was I not informed of her dangerous illness?"

"Mrs. Wroat died sudden, sir," answered the man respectfully.

"Why was I not telegraphed to immediately upon her death?"

"I don't know, sir. Mr. Harris, he manages the funeral, sir."

"Show us up to our room, Toppen. You are perhaps aware that I am the old lady's heir? I am the nephew of her deceased husband, who left her a good share of his property. It all comes to me. I shall continue you in my service, Toppen, when I come up to town to live, which will be immediately. But, come. Show us our room."

Toppen hesitated.

"Beg parding, sir," he said, "but I'll just speak to Mrs. Peters. Miss Wroat, she can't be disturbed, and I don't know which room azackly Mrs. Peters intends for you."

"The amber room, of course," said Mrs. Blight superciliously. "We shall have the best room in the house, whatever Mrs. Peters or any one else may say."

"Miss Wroat has the amber room," said Toppen.

"Miss Wroat!" repeated the lawyer. "And who may Miss Wroat be?"

"She is Mrs. Wroat's young niece, sir, that she fetched home with her from Canterbury. The Missus said we were to call the young lady Miss Wroat. If you'll walk into the drawing-room, I'll go for Mrs. Peters."

The Blights went into the drawing-room as desired, and there awaited Mrs. Peters' appearance with outward bravado and some inward anxiety.

"You don't suppose the old woman can have made a will giving Lally Bird her fortune?" whispered the Canterbury lawyer's wife.

"No. I think she went off so suddenly at the last that she had no time to make a will. But if she did make one I stand as good a chance as any one of inheriting her money, even after all that has come and gone between her and us. She got her money from her husband, who was my uncle. The old woman had a stern sense of justice, and she would never have left her entire fortune away from her husband's nephew, who had, as one may say, a claim upon it. No doubt she left her great-niece a legacy, but you'll find that we come in for the best share of her money."

Mr. Blight did not reflect that Mrs. Wroat's "stern sense of justice" might cause her to leave her money away from him, instead of leaving it to him.

"No matter whether she leaves the girl fifty pounds a year or two hundred pounds a year," said Mrs. Blight venomously, "she goes out of this house on the day after the funeral, bag and baggage, the artful jade! I won't have her under my roof a night longer than I can help."

"Quite right, Laura. We should have had the whole pile only for her."

"I shall furnish the whole house new," said Mrs. Blight reflectively. "Aunt Wroat had abominable taste, and the colors here quite ruin my complexion. Why don't Peters or the housekeeper come? I shall discharge Peters—"

The last words were overheard by Peters herself, who came in in list slippers and a black gown, staid, angular, and sour-visaged as usual, with a warm heart nearly bursting with grief under her prim bodice. She courtesied to the self-invited guests, her lips tightly compressed, and an ominous gleam in her tear-blurred eyes.

"Ah, Peters at last!" said Mrs. Blight condescendingly. "We want to go up to our room, Peters, before we see the remains of our dear aunt. Why were we not sent for yesterday, Peters?"

"I suppose Mr. Harris forgot to telegraph to you," said Peters grimly. "He spoke of doing so. Your room is ready, and I'll send Buttons up to show you the way."

"Toppen calls Miss Bird Miss Wroat—ha, ha!" laughed the Canterbury lawyer. "A queer idea, isn't it, Peters? Does the girl call herself Miss Wroat?"

Peters bowed.

"It was my lady's wish," she said.

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Blight. "By the by, Peters, here's a sovereign for you. I always admired your sturdy independence, Peters. My aunt loved you, ah, like a sister, and leaned upon you, and all that, Peters. I hope she has remembered you at the last. It would be a pity if she had not left some trifle, to mark her appreciation of your fidelity and affection."

"I have no fault to find," said Peters coldly, rejecting the coin. "My dear lady remembered me generously in her will—"

"Her will?" interrupted Mr. Blight eagerly. "She did make a will then? I am glad to hear it. Had she died without a will, Miss Bird and Mrs. Wroat's other relatives would have divided the Wroat property and fattened upon it. As it is, I am sure Mrs. Wroat has done me justice. She would not have remembered any faults of ours in her dying hour, but would have seen to it that Mr. Wroat's nephew had his proper share in Mr. Wroat's property. I suppose you know the purport of the will?"

Peters bowed assent.

"I shouldn't mind a matter of five pounds," said Mr. Blight insinuatingly. "I should like to know if my poor aunt did justice to me in her last moments?"

"I don't want your money, Mr. Blight," said Peters, "but if you are anxious to know, I will tell you that Mrs. Wroat did you justice in her will. That is all that I will say. I am not at liberty to betray the contents of the will, which will be read immediately after the burial."

The countenances of the two fortune-hunters glowed with delight. They interpreted Mrs. Peters' words to suit themselves.

Mrs. Peters gave them no time for further questioning. She summoned the boot-boy, and ordered him to conduct the guests to their chamber, and then departed to the room where her dead mistress was lying. The boy led the way up stairs, Mr. and Mrs. Blight following, and ushered them into the red room, opposite Lally's apartment, and next in beauty and convenience to Lally's rooms.

"Peters goes out of this house when Miss Bird goes," cried Mrs. Blight, sinking into a chair and puffing heavily. "Charles, I believe I shall take the old lady's room for mine, and save coming up stairs. It will be so convenient. And you must run out a new dressing-room and bath-room; those down stairs don't suit me at all. Aunt Wroat's personal tastes were so horrid plain. I shall clean out all the present servants. I know that Toppen hates us both, but he was forced to be civil to the heir, you know. And, by the way, we must have mourning clothes, Charles. You must write to your tailor to send a man to take your measure immediately, and I will drop a note to Jay's, and have them send a complete mourning outfit and a dress-maker to me."

The notes were written in Mr. Blight's most grandiloquent style, and although they were brief, they betrayed the complacency of a satisfied heir in every line.

The tailor and dress-maker arrived in due time, and Mrs. Blight discussed ribbons and shades of silk, and the respective merits of French and English crape up stairs, while the old lady was being robed for the grave below, and Lally lay upon her own bed, weeping as though her heart were breaking.

Lally kept to her own room until after the funeral. She could not eat nor sleep. Etiquette forbade her attending her deceased relative to the grave, but she watched the departure of the funeral train from her window, her eyes almost blinded with her tears.

After the funeral, Mr. Blight and Mr. Harris the lawyer returned to the mansion in Mount street, and the latter summoned Mrs. Blight, Lally and Peters, to hear the will read.

Mrs. Blight swept in, clad in the deepest mourning, her garments covered deep with crape, a black-bordered handkerchief held at her eyes. Mr. Blight placed an armed chair for her near the hearth, the October day being chilly, and took a seat at her side with quite an air of proprietorship of the house.

Lally, in deep mourning, came next, with the faithful Peters, also in mourning habiliments. Mr. Harris placed a chair for Lally, and Peters sat near her young mistress, to whose service she intended to devote herself.

Mr. Harris then, with preparatory clearings of his throat, read the will. It commenced by declaring the testator of sound mind, being the usual formula, and proceeded with an enumeration of property at which the Blights grew inwardly radiant.

"All this, my real and personal property," read Mr. Harris, in effect, "I give and bequeath, absolutely and without reserve, to—my beloved great-niece, Lalla Bird, the daughter of John Bird and Clara Mulford Percy his wife, to her and to her heirs and assigns forever."

The Blights gasped for breath.

Lally's countenance did not change. She knew that her days of poverty were over; that she would never again wander shelterless and forlorn, glad to find shelter at night in a barn, and famished for food. All that distress for her was forever past. Her comfort and prosperity had been secured by the tenderness of her kindly and eccentric old relative, but Lally would willingly have gone back to her old-time poverty and toil, if by so doing she might have recalled her good friend from her grave.

"I say, this is simply infamous!" gasped Mr. Blight, turning upon Mr. Harris fiercely. "Infamous, sir! Do you know whose money, sir, this wretched old dotard has willed away so lightly? I'll tell you, sir. It was my late uncle's. It should be mine—and, by Heaven, it shall be mine. I'll appeal to the law. I'll contest the will."

"Are you a lawyer? Why do you talk so childishly?" demanded Mr. Harris. "The property of which Mrs. Wroat has disposed was hers absolutely, to dispose of as she pleased. If your late uncle had wished to provide for you, he would have done so. You are no relative of Mrs. Wroat, and you ought to know that if you contest the will, you won't get a penny. The girl would get it just the same—at least a portion of it—even if you succeeded in breaking the will, which you can't. Mrs. Wroat was indisputably in sound mind when she dictated that will. Under any circumstances, Mr. Blight, you can get nothing. With the exception of an annuity to be paid out of the income to Peters during her lifetime, the remainder of the property is absolutely Miss Bird's—or Miss Wroat's, as it was the wish of our deceased friend that the young lady should be called."

Mr. Blight sullenly recognized the truth of these words. He had been left out in the cold, and he was angry, disappointed, infuriated.

"Oh, my new and expensive mourning!" said Mrs. Blight spitefully. "I wouldn't have put on black for the old creature if I had known the truth. Peters ought to pay me the hundred pounds I have expended. I shall sell every black rag I've bought!"

Lally arose to retire, and Mr. Harris and Peters attended her from the room. Mr. Harris presently returned, and said gravely:

"Miss Wroat is fatigued, and Mrs. Peters thinks her unequal to the task of entertaining guests. At the request of Mrs. Peters, therefore, I have to suggest, sir and madam, that you take your leave without again seeing Miss Wroat. I will remain to do the honors of the house, in Miss Wroat's stead, at your departure."

Mr. and Mrs. Blight, thus quietly dismissed, retired to their room and packed their effects. An hour later their cab was announced, and they came down stairs, the lady leaning on her husband's arm and weeping with rage.

As they sat in the cab, the luggage piled on top, and slowly departed from the house where they had hoped to reign, Mrs. Blight looked back, sobbing in her anguish:

"And it might have been ours but for the artful minx I took in, as it were out of the streets. I'll never do a good action again in all my life—never. And now I must go back to poverty, and scrimp to save what I've spent in mourning, and we and our poor dear lambs may fetch up at the union, while that treacherous cat Lally Bird lolls in wealth. O dear! O dear!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A COMPREHENSIVE WORD.

One day last autumn old Smilax kept his boy out from school to assist in digging potatoes. The rust had struck the tubers, and Smilax feared that decay might set in if they were not speedily dug. When the boy next attended school his father sent by him a note explaining why he had been taken from his studies; and in this explanation a due statement of the potato disease was given. Mr. Syntax, the teacher, was a crusty, irate man, and upon beholding a full page of cramped caligraphy, where a very brief excuse might have sufficed, he was wroth; and he said to the boy,—

"Tell your father not to write such a mess as this again. If he has occasion to keep you away from school hereafter, a single word of explanation as to the cause of your absence will be sufficient."

A few days afterward old Smilax went at his second field of potatoes, and claimed the assistance of his son, as before. When the lad next appeared at school he bore to Mr. Syntax a note from his father containing this single comprehensive word, and nothing more:—

"KEPTATOMAYATERINGO!"

S. C., JR.

VERY TRUE.—Men may sophisticate as they please, but the man who does not endeavor to pay his debts is no better than the man who steals outright.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

THE JAPANESE EMBASSY.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Yes, the world is surely moving with the music of the Christian time,
Daily through Creation victories of the Right reclaims awhile!
Victories of true Religion, victories of Science, Art,
For the Mind yet larger freedom, larger brotherhood for Heart.

Labor's genuine crowns in glory: more true Worth redeems from its lot
So the humblest moves nearer to the Great First Worker above.

See the thrones of Bigots tappin; crumbles Superstition's power;
Pyramids no more symbols of the Life along the line.

See, amid how many nations sunk to death despotic rule,
On the wreck of brutal serfdom Reason builds up Manhood's school.

And behold, the Right is breaking of Old Asia's Night of Sin!

On the New World's shores are walking the lightcrowding Japanese.

Welcome to our scene, ye pilgrims! Welcome, for we surely know
Thus Humanity from communing with the stranger, better grow.

Europe, still in progress onward! Even, Africa, for her time,
In the vast range of Empires, at least as Set Exemption use!

Bell of Time, roll out thy music! Right's alone the Indestructible!
Brotherhood of all men, nations, and the Star of Retribution!

MAKING A BUSTLE.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"There an't nothing like a coffee bag, Miss," said Dalia Jane.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Miss Scranton. "I never wore one in my life. I like to be straight and loose for the fashions, and do look as if I'd just come out of the Ark, as Elizabeth says I do, why, I suppose I must wear something of the sort. I know how it is in the city, and how fashionable city folks get to be; and I'm sure I don't want to disgrace my relations by looking like country cousins."

"Law me, Miss! I'm sure Miss Lizzie didn't wear nothing of the sort," said Dalia Jane, who, being lady's maid and seamstress to the younger Miss Scranton of New York, was staying her best, according to orders, to make the elder Miss Scranton, her aunt, from Pokeohahala, Connecticut, present the outward appearance of other people of that date; "but you see, Miss Lizzie is very stylish, and besides all the thing now-a-days, even for old ladies—when I don't mean for a moment to call you old, Miss Scranton—"

"I think," said Miss Scranton, with a shrewd smile, "Well, Dalia Jane, I don't object to a bustle, but where's a go to get a coffee bag remains a mystery. Perhaps the grocer—"

"Oh, bag pardon, there's one in the house; han't how I came to think of it," said Dalia Jane. "It's used for a piece bag, and it is in the garret, and I'll run and get it in a minute. It's only half a one, and you'll have to sew it on, I've got to do is just to take and draw up the string and tie it round your waist, over your own skirt, and there you sit on that thick silk overskirt of Miss Lizzie's, and you're all right."

"Am I?" gasped Miss Scranton. "O dear. Well, if it real all right, as Dalia Jane, though how I'm to get about in all that, I don't see. However—"

While Jane hurried away to the trunk room, and Miss Scranton, the picture of despair, sat down in a wing chair to wait for her, she was a sudden lady of fifty, rather thin and rather angular, but very well looking. She had not married simply because no one had offered who was quite eligible. Perhaps if Elizabeth Spicer had proposed, in those old days, when school-boy dudes, making love to their grandmothers.

The bonnet with crown and cape might do for an elderly person, like Aunt Scranton, Miss Elizabeth had decided; but to walk Broadway and shop and visit picture galleries with any one whose short of black silk would have been a sight fit for the morning board, was beyond her powers of endurance. There was a limit to what she would do for appearances, and a bustle, and the subsequent height into a coffee bag.

Dalia Jane was, she thought of her class, rather apt to go to extremes in the fashion. Miss Lizzie would hardly have recommended the coffee bag, often worn by Dalia Jane on full dress occasions; but being emptied I of its pieces, the thing was adjusted, and Miss Scranton, who had before the mirror taken a view of herself.

It makes me look rather stout, don't it, Dalia Jane?" she queried. "You don't think I look too stout, do you?"

"Why, that is the object, Miss," said Dalia Jane. "No lady can stick out too much, nowadays. You don't look stout, stylish. That's necessary for middle-aged ladies, but young ladies, like Miss Lizzie and myself, we're slim by nature. Miss Lizzie natural like a wand."

To her bing the dressmaker sent off their mouths and shelter, too," asked Miss Scranton sweetly.

"Not that I've heard of, Miss," said Dalia Jane, in good faith.

"Because if she so far gone in their minds as to bang their hands so, generally do," said Miss Scranton, and she went on to say, "Having the unwonted weight of arrangings after the bustle was on, and the consciousness of the fact that she "fill like an elephant."

"You've certainly got enough bustle at last," said Lizzie pacifically, "though I don't know that any one can go too far in fashion the first month or two."

A coffee bag," said Miss Scranton. "I feel as if I was perfectly disgraced, and as if every one that met me would know of it."

"Not unless you told them," said Lizzie. "Well, come on, Auntie.

And away they went—Aunt Scranton, who was light of foot and strong of limb, in the usual light attire, finding every step a trial, because of the coffee bag and the pulled, rolled and bethigged overskirt, and kept in a hard and unyielding form by the numerous rows of the strings of her bustle should become loosened, and the contents of the bag spill out in the expected manner for a public. This led to her falling into the habit of giving a sly tug at her skirt, keeping at the same time a sharp eye on any by-stander who might be led by her movements into suspecting the coffee bag.

Just now, as we all know, the city is overflowing with cheap and showy imitations of pearls and false pearls, as bright as the genuine, which may also be bought for a dollar a set.

One of the establishments where such things are sold happened to be in the shop which Miss Scranton and her niece took on their homeward way, and here the window Miss Scranton paused, transfixed.

"They can't be real," said the good lady; but, mercy, how they shine! How thoughtful it was of Elizabeth Spicer to have asked her to buy a set for Sunday," said she.

Miss Lizzie glanced at the string. It was not one of her opening days.

"Would you mind if I ran over the way to get some gloves while you shop here?" she asked.

"Law, no!" said Aunt Scranton.

"I'll wait here then. I'll wait until you come."

And Lizzie left her aunt to her fate and departed.

"Well, ma'am," said a pert young person, with a great deal of lace of several shades about her head, and much white powder on her nose, "what can I do for you, ma'am?"

"Well, sir—young person, I don't exactly know," said the lady.

"Don't see how I'm to wait on you then," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, there's that same young fellow calling as me again that came past yesterday."

Aunt Scranton finding herself, as she supposed, unobserved, gave a soft pull at the coffee bag, and ascertained that it was safe.

"My Horace has lived with me many years," pursued the old lady blandly, notwithstanding her inward agitation of the young person's manner, "and I'd like to take her home a present. I'm just a stout of your fairer sex in size, if you please."

"Ain't got any," said the young person pertly.

"Isn't that window yours?" asked Aunt Scranton.

"To be sure," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, I've asked you once, I've asked you twice—"

Aunt Scranton felt for the coffee bag once more, and perceived with joy that the two righteous indignations, upon which the young person was acting, and reflecting on the opinion of the world as to the neglect of customers, forgot the young man for a while, and condescended to remark:

"Perhaps you mean the Kaneschaka gems and Creole set?"

"Perhaps I do," said Aunt Scranton.

"Next counter," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, he's waving his handkerchief."

Leaving forward, she unconsciously swept from the counter a pin of lace collars, two shillings each, which fell to the floor and were kicked out of sight in the rush of young person, who went to see the young man with the handkerchief.

As they returned together, "Cash" came also among them.

"See that old woman?" he asked. "She keeps a boarding-house. Regular old Shylock. She's awful pulky, too. Miss anything?"

"Oh, he's the young person, and though she acted queer, I don't think she's a thief. How oddly things come about! How little we know of each other!" said Miss Scranton, sighing heavily, and she went on:

SOLITUDE.

The difficulty which is always experienced, but usually soon forgotten, by children, in learning to read, of pronouncing the word alone, and of the qu—ie—sshe words, to acquire a correct idea of their meaning, is, in the case of Miss Ida Davis, in a measure still operative, and the habitual error into which she has been led by the use of the word has, in its turn, given rise to a singularly original and erroneous train of reasoning.

Miss Ida Davis is a child of seven years old, and the only daughter of a widowed mother, who is a resident of the city of Boston. Ida is a delicate, fragile child, and has never been strong enough to attend school, and has consequently been her mother's companion and constant associate. Mrs. Davis, in common with many other mothers, has been in the habit of reading aloud to her daughter, and has frequently, in the course of her reading, used the word "solitude," and has, in answer to the child's inquiries, explained its meaning to be "loneliness," "being alone," "having no one to play with," and the like. Ida has, in consequence, come to the conclusion that solitude is a kind of punishment, and that it is inflicted upon those who are naughty. Hence, when she has been guilty of any misdemeanor, and has been sent to her room, she has, with childish glee, exclaimed that she was going to be punished by solitude, and has, on her return, been heard to say that she had been punished by solitude, and that she "liked it very much indeed."

Mrs. Davis, in order to correct this error, has explained to her daughter that solitude is a state of mind, and not a punishment, and that it is possible to be in solitude in a crowd, and to be entirely free from solitude when alone. Ida has, however, failed to comprehend the meaning of her mother's explanations, and has, on several occasions, been heard to say that she was in solitude when she was in the midst of a crowd, and that she was not in solitude when she was alone.

The other day, Mrs. Davis, who has been in poor health for some time, and who has been confined to her room for several days, was suddenly seized with a violent attack of pain in the head, and was obliged to lie down. She called Ida to her bedside, and said to her, "Ida, dear, I am very sick, and I must lie down and keep very still. I shall not be able to read to you, and you must not disturb me. You must go into the next room, and play by yourself, and be very quiet." Ida left the room, and her mother heard her say to herself, "I am in solitude now, and I am glad of it."

Mrs. Davis, who was suffering from a severe headache, was unable to answer the question, but she soon heard Ida say, "Mamma, what is solitude?"